

232

H88

1

Huffman
Progressive unfold-
ing of the Messianic
Hope
"cc. No. 185139 425"

232**H88**

Keep Your Card in This Pocket

Books will be issued only on presentation of proper library cards.

Unless labeled otherwise, books may be retained for two weeks. Borrowers finding books marked, defaced or mutilated are expected to report same at library desk; otherwise the last borrower will be held responsible for all imperfections discovered.

The card holder is responsible for all books drawn on this card.

Penalty for over-due books 2c a day plus cost of notices.

Lost cards and change of residence must be reported promptly.



Public Library

Kansas City, Mo.

186+32=220.

KANSAS CITY, MO PUBLIC LIBRARY



MAR 9 '49

00001 00000 4

THE PROGRESSIVE UNFOLDING
OF THE MESSIANIC HOPE

JASPER A. HUFFMAN, D.D.

THE PROGRESSIVE UNFOLDING OF THE MESSIANIC HOPE

BY

JASPER A. HUFFMAN, D.D.

DEAN OF MARION COLLEGE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY,
MARION, INDIANA

*Author of "Redemption Completed," "Old Testament
Messages of the Christ," "Job a World Example,"
"Upper Room Messages," etc.*

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

PROF. CHARLES R. ERDMAN, D.D.

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY



NEW YORK

GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

Copyright, 1924,
By George H. Doran Company

THE PROGRESSIVE UNFOLDING OF
THE MESSIANIC HOPE

— A —

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

11-150-25

AUG 13 1924

Dedictory

TO MY MANY STUDENTS AND FRIENDS
WHO HAVE PONDERED WITH ME OVER THIS "HOPE"
IN THE PAST, AND WHO SHALL DO SO IN THE FUTURE,
THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

INTRODUCTION

BY CHARLES R. ERDMAN, D.D.

There is a deep significance in the statement of John, the inspired seer of Patmos, "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"; for, witness to the divine person and redeeming work of Christ, is the impelling motive, the inner meaning, the ultimate goal in all the prophetic utterance of the Old Testament and the New. In fact, it is said truly that the one unifying theme of all the sacred Scriptures is "Redemption through Jesus Christ in order to the establishment upon earth of the perfected kingdom of God".

It is with certain pregnant predictions of the coming of the Redeemer and the future glories of His kingdom that this review of "The Progressive Unfolding of the Messianic Hope" is concerned.

In his treatment of these great utterances, the author is guided by two familiar canons of Biblical interpretation, first, the progressive character of divine revelation, and second, the unfolding nature of prophetic perspective.

According to the first, God revealed to His people

in shadowy, imperfect and symbolic forms, truth which, age after age, He enabled them to understand with ever-increasing clearness and fulness. Thus, for example, the doctrine of redemption can be traced from the cryptic promise in Eden, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the Serpent's head, through the scene on Calvary, to the apocalyptic vision of the ultimate triumph of the "Lamb that was slain".

According to the second, inspired prophecies often are given germinal and initial fulfilments, and then later fulfilments which are larger and more exhaustive, and the former may be separated from the latter even by the lapse of centuries. The prophet sees on the horizon coming events which he describes in language applicable to more momentous events which ultimately appear on a more distant horizon; or, if he sees both, then his perspective is so foreshortened that in his description both pictures are blended into one. The prophets at times seemed to realise that there were wider implications in their statements than they themselves understood, as we read, for instance, of their "searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow".

These canons of interpretation the author applies

to certain impressive predictions concerning Christ and His kingdom, selected from the Old and New Testaments. He shows how during all the passing centuries God kept alive in the hearts of His ancient people, by ever more definite promises, a hope of the coming and the glorious kingdom of a Redeemer, an "Anointed One", a "Messiah", a "Christ"; and further, how, when the Saviour had come and had been rejected by his people and had suffered and died and risen again, accomplishing his atoning work, he taught his followers, by his own repeated promises and by the predictions of his apostles, to look for his return in power and great glory and for the perfecting of His kingdom upon earth. Thus the author shows that while the hope of a coming Christ was cherished by Israel of old, a similar hope based on ever more definite predictions, inspires and cheers the church of the present day.

Not all of his readers will agree with the interpretations placed by the author upon some of these passages. Many divergencies of opinion will emerge in reviewing what he has said touching the thorny theme of the "Millennium". However, none will fail to be impressed with his irenic spirit and his seriousness of purpose; and all will surely agree, that, while we are left ignorant as to the times and processes, the "Messianic Hope", the hope of the perfected kingdom of Christ, is the only hope

of the world. Surely the times are such as to demand the reviewing and cherishing of this hope. Amidst the wars and earthquakes and the distress of nations, we do well to ponder the predictions of our Lord's return; and Christians of all schools of thought should welcome a book which turns their attention to the "Messianic Hope", and enables them to unite with more of faith and fervour in the last prayer of the apostles: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus".

C. R. E.

Princeton, New Jersey.

FOREWORD

For some years the author has pursued his study of the Word of God with a growing conviction, that between certain extreme views touching the Messianic programme there was a happy medium, which would eliminate a part and retain some of each. This has been the case in all great controversies.

Then, too, he has been convinced, that a unity and progress characterised the revelation of God which finally culminated in the spelling out of Himself to the world in the person of Jesus Christ; that God revealed Himself in His great purpose as rapidly as the human family was ready to receive that revelation; that the measuring stick with which He measured men was consistent with the light of the day in which they lived, and that with increasing light came new responsibility.

To him it has appeared very clear, that Jesus Christ came into the world with a definite Messianic programme; that He never groped in darkness or uncertainty, but carried out to the letter that part of the Messianic programme which He came to fulfil; that the Word of God portrayed faithfully both

that part of the redemptive work which Christ came to accomplish and any subsequent items in that great plan.

In the preparation of this volume the author acknowledges his indebtedness to a number of others. Where quotations or citations are made, credit is given, either in footnotes or in the text. Special obligation is here acknowledged to Prof. Chas. R. Erdman, D.D., Prof. Geo. L. Robinson, D.D., Rev. W. B. Riley, D.D. and Rev. J. C. Masee, D.D., all of whom have read the manuscript, several of whom have made valuable suggestions which have been incorporated in the treatment.

The American Standard version of the Scriptures is quoted throughout.

These studies were not originally prepared for publication, but for lecture work, both in the class room and popular gatherings. There has been a persistent, growing demand, however, for their publication, and the author hereby accedes to the demand, trusting that he may be of help to others in a like quest for the truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus.

J. A. H.

Marion, Indiana.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I THE HOPE INTRODUCED	17
II THE MESSIANIC HOPE IN THE PSALMS .	42
III THE MESSIANIC HOPE IN THE PROPHECIES	56
IV MESSIANIC EXPECTATION OUTSIDE OF JU- DAISM	81
V THE MESSIANISM OF THE JEWS . . .	88
VI THE MESSIANISM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST .	95
VII CONTENT OF THE MESSIANIC SELF- CONSCIOUSNESS	103
VIII THE COLLAPSE OF THE MESSIANIC HOPE	115
IX THE APOSTLES IN THE SCHOOL OF TRANSI- TION	122
X THE APOSTLES STILL IN THE SCHOOL OF TRANSITION	137
XI A REVIVED AND CLARIFIED MESSIANIC HOPE	150
XII OTHER STAGES IN THE MESSIANIC PRO- GRAMME	159

**THE PROGRESSIVE UNFOLDING
OF THE MESSIANIC HOPE**

THE PROGRESSIVE UNFOLDING OF THE MESSIANIC HOPE

CHAPTER I

THE HOPE INTRODUCED

For us who are the heirs of nineteen centuries of accumulated light and blessing which came as a result of the historic Christ, it is not easy to realise that things were not always as they now are. But a careful survey of the subject discloses the fact, that God was a long time in getting the world ready for the sending of His Son. During the centuries preceding Christ's coming, God gave to men, through the prophets, a progressive revelation of Him who was to come, and the nature of the work which He was to accomplish.

This revelation began with a significant utterance, a somewhat veiled prophecy and promise (Gen. 3:15), called by Old Testament scholars, the *Prō-tē''-van-gél-i-um*, which contained all subsequent Messianic prophecy as in a germ. It continued to unfold and enlarge until it burst forth in the historic Christ, who was God spelled out to the world.

18 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

The term "Messiah" is a Jewish one, derived from the Hebrew verb *Mashach*, meaning to anoint. The "Messiah" then means the anointed one. While this term did not come to be generally employed by the Jews until later Old Testament times, the first instance being that of Daniel 9:25, there were other terms and expressions used which are as unmistakable in their meaning. The New Testament synonym for the Hebrew "Messiah" is the Greek *Christos*, also meaning anointed, which has been transliterated into the English word *Christ*.

Herein lies our pleasant task—the tracing of the Messianic hope as it was progressively unfolded to the world, noting its origin, enlargement and realisation. There are certain aspects of the Messianic hope which are yet future and will remain matters of prophecy until "hope" has given place to a full and glorious fruition of all that was included in the Messianic mission.

At this early stage of our study, it will assist in a fuller appreciation of the progressive unfolding of the Messianic hope, to realise that God's requirements of men were always consistent with the light of the age in which they lived. Noah was a "perfect" man "in his generations", but the moral measuring stick with which God measured men in Noah's day is not the one with which He measures men today, because God's revelation of Himself in Noah's

day was but dim, compared to the revelation which He has made of Himself in the historic Christ.

God's moral measuring stick is a sliding scale, adjustable to the moral measurements of men, in keeping with the light of the day in which they live. The length of this measuring rod has been gradually increasing from the beginning of revelation. An illustration of the fact that God sets new standards for periods of greater light is found in the fact that Christ, as is recorded in one chapter (Matt. 5), repudiates six well-recognised standards for Old Testament conduct, and replaces them with higher standards. A recognition of this fact will not only assist in the study of Messianism, but will also aid in the answering of the question, why God permitted and even sanctioned certain things in the old dispensation which are condemned by both the letter and the spirit of the new dispensation.

In the setting of this higher standard, Jesus did not contradict nor amend the law of Moses, but revealed all that this law contained. Formerly it had been regarded as applying to external things, or certain acts. Jesus showed that the law referred to certain motives and thoughts, as well as deeds.

It is no new doctrine which is being advocated when the progressive unfolding of God's plan and purpose is pointed out. This fact is acknowledged

20 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

by many of the world's greatest scholars, even though they differ in their understanding of details.

A. B. Davidson insists, that though prophecy varies, it is directed to one general design and says: "In Paradise, it gave the first hope of a Redeemer. After the deluge, it established the peace of the natural world. In Abraham it founded the double covenant of Canaan and the Gospel. In the age of the law, it spoke of the second prophet, and foreshadowed in types, the Christian doctrine, but foretold most largely the future fate of the selected people, who were placed under that preparatory dispensation. In the time of David, it revealed the Gospel Kingdom, with the promise of the temporal. In the days of the later prophets, it presignified the changes of the Mosaic covenant, embraced the history of the chief pagan kingdoms, and completed the annunciation of the Messiah and His work of redemption. After the captivity, it gave a last and more urgent information of the approaching advent of the Gospel."¹

Patrick Fairbairn describes the beginning and increase of prophecy in these picturesque words: "It appears somewhat like a river, small in its beginnings, and though still proceeding, yet often losing itself for ages under ground, then bursting forth anew with increased volume, and at last rising into

¹ "Discourses on Prophecy," pp. 355, 356.

a swollen stream—greatest by far when it has come within prospect of its termination.”²

A modern writer contributes a helpful word to the subject of a progressive revelation when he says: “The trouble with much that we see and hear about development and progressive revelation is that it seems to assume that if revelation was a progress, therefore it must be historically untrue and unreliable. God did not tell Moses all that He had to reveal, therefore what Moses was told is not true or reliable. We have a fuller revelation in the Prophets and in Christ, therefore what was known before is not true. That is a Hegelian fallacy which has vitiated much of recent thinking on the subject of progress and is like saying that the acorn is not true and cannot be depended upon because later it develops into an oak. The acorn is not the whole story, but it is the story as far as it has been developed, and it is just as true and reliable as the oak. The oak does not contradict the acorn—it only declares its final meanings and possibilities. John does not contradict Moses, but unveils the final meanings and matchless issues of the revelation made to Moses. The development of the Bible and Christianity, which after all is the fundamental principle of progress in the world and history, is not a changing which results from the experiments and blunders of men

² “Prophecy,” p. 33.

22 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

who are feeling their way in the dark and have to change because they were mistaken, but the changing which is the natural result of an unfolding life and programme that are in no way uncertain as to their final issues. Christianity and the Bible are the progress of a divine programme, and men's programmes and activities are truly progressive only as they are in line with and are the expression of this divine programme. Much that is being written and said in our day about a static religion and revelation is nothing but the dust of a tragic misunderstanding or wilful ignorance on the part of men who ought to know better." ³

Says Milton S. Terry: "The Messianic hope, first uttered in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15), was a fountain-head from which a gradually increasing stream went forth, receiving constant accessions as prophet after prophet arose commissioned to utter some clearer oracle. In a general way, at least, each new prophet added to the work of his predecessors." ⁴

James Orr, in the closing chapter of his volume, "The Problem of the Old Testament," treats the subject of progressive revelation at length. Among other things he says: "Progressive revelation culminates in Christ. In Christ the long development

³ John MacInnis, "King's Business," June, 1923, p. 690.

⁴ "Biblical Hermeneutics," p. 442.

of Old Testament religion—Abrahamic promise, Mosaic covenant, Levitical sacrifice, Davidic kingship, prophetic hopes, Messianic ideals, strain of Psalmist, redemptive purpose—finds its fulfilment and point of repose. His person clasps Old and New Testament into one. To understand the Old Testament aright we must look to this goal to which all its roads lead.”⁵

The supreme authority upon the subject of a progressive revelation is the Bible itself. Here we read: “God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers (or diverse) manners, hath at the end of these days (the time of the consummation of the process of revelation) spoken unto us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things” (Hebrews 1:1-2). Revelation is then seen to be a progressive movement, culminating in Jesus Christ, who is God’s final “word.” This is the supreme revelation, and we have no intimation that God intends to give the world any further revelation. What remains to be achieved, is to discover what Christ is and means to the world. Truth, itself, is not progressive, but eternal: it is the revealing of it that is progressive. God revealed Himself to the world as rapidly as the world was ready for the revelation.

⁵ “Problem of the Old Testament,” p. 477.

24 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

ORIGIN OF THE MESSIANIC HOPE

The earliest chapter in human history is closed by a sudden interruption caused by sin. So violent was this interruption, that the beautiful picture of creation with its peace, fellowship and bliss was supplanted by one of threatening, fear and sorrow. A curse upon the man, the woman and the ground is the fearful and discouraging result of the fact of sin. This picture, however, is not the only one. Nowhere does God paint a black picture because of sin, without painting alongside of it a brighter one, which may be realised, by grace, in its stead. The curse did not stop with the man, the woman and the ground; but it was turned upon the agent of sin—Satan, and a significant Messianic prophecy was uttered. To the serpent, the agent of Satan, God said: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). Here the prophecy of a deliverer is unmistakably uttered. Even a temporary bruise, that of the heel, suggesting the apparent, momentary defeat of the deliverer is predicted: but, at the same time, the deliverer's ultimate and final triumph is prophesied, in his bruising of the serpent's head, which means a fatal blow. Three things stand out

in this early but significant prophecy: The deliverer was to be:

1. Of the seed of the woman, meaning her posterity.
2. Temporarily hindered.
3. Finally victorious.

Sin, from the moment it entered into the world in the form of disobedience, has wrought havoc and ruin. Its destructive work can be catalogued as follows:

1. It robbed man of the moral image of His Creator with which he was stamped in creation.
2. It robbed man of his communion and fellowship with God.
3. It brought a blight or curse upon man's heritage, the earth.
4. It brought death as God had previously warned (Gen. 2:17).

If these are truly the effects of sin, as they certainly are, then a *deliverer* must necessarily undo these, if he be a *deliverer* at all. The work, then, of a deliverer is as follows:

1. It must restore to man the Creator's moral image.
2. To restore to man communion and fellowship with God.
3. To remove the blight or curse from man's heritage.

26 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

4. To conquer death in behalf of mankind.

From the nature of the curse and the work of the deliverer, we see that his work is not merely within the realm of spiritual things, but within the realms of both *spiritual* and *material* things. From this brief but graphic description of the consequences of sin and this earliest promise or prophecy which gave rise to a Messianic hope, we are able to forecast, with considerable accuracy, the necessary Messianic accomplishments. The maximum of the results of sin must mark the minimum of the work of the Redeemer.

FURTHER DELINEATION IN THE PENTATEUCH

In those earlier books of the Bible called the Pentateuch, considerable progress is made in the sketching of the Messianic hope. Besides the single verse which has just been pointed out (Gen. 3:15) and which must always be considered by Bible students as the original word upon the subject of Messianism, there are several passages which register progress in the revelation which God was making to His people concerning His intentions.

Of Semitic Stock. Of the three sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth, God selected Shem as the one from whose line religious hope was to spring. The intimation is given in Noah's blessings upon his sons:

“Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem;
And let Canaan be his servant.
God enlarge Japheth,
And let him dwell in the tents of Shem;
And let Canaan be his servant.”

—*Gen.* 9: 26.

Here Ham is appointed, in the person of his son Canaan, to slavery. Japheth is made heir to wide prosperity. Shem is given pre-eminence in religion, which blessing is to be shared with his brethren.

A Son of Abraham. It was to Abraham, the son of Terah, a descendent of Shem, that God gave a peculiar promise, one which could not be omitted in any serious effort to trace the Messianic hope:

“And Jehovah said to Abram, Get thee out of thy country (Mesopotamia), and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto the land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

—*Gen.* 12: 1-3.

There were at least three distinct things in this communication of God to Abraham:

He was to become a great nation.

He was to have a great name.

He was to be made a great blessing—to all the families of the earth.

28 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

It is the last item which stands out distinctly as Messianic. This promise is referred to in Gen. 18:18; is repeated in Gen. 22:18, where it is coupled with the promise of a posterity as the stars of heaven, and as the sands of the sea in number; also repeated in Gen. 26:4, in connection with the promise of Canaan to Abraham's descendants, and in each instance is unmistakably Messianic. The Psalmist predicts the fulfilment of the promise in the Messiah, probably typified by Solomon (Psalm 72:17); Peter so interpreted it in his Pentecostal sermon (Acts 3:25), and Paul argues Messianism from it (Galatians 3:8).

Judah's Descendant. Tracing the line of Abraham to Jacob, when the twelve sons were to become the heads of respective families of Israel, either one of which might stand at the head of the ancestral line of Him in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, God saw fit to point out in the bestowing of the Patriarchal blessing, the particular line in which He would come: It was Judah's line:

“The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet
Until Shiloh come.
And unto him shall the obedience of the
peoples be.”

—Gen. 49:10.

The word "Shiloh" is used only once in the Scriptures, descriptive of a person. Jews and Christians have always agreed that the reference is to the Messiah, although there have been various ways of explaining the verse. The word comes from a Hebrew verb, *Shalah*, meaning to be at rest or at peace, suggesting that when such a lawgiver comes there will be peace. This step in the unfolding of the Messianic hope discloses several distinct things:

He is to be a descendant of Judah.

He is to be a lawgiver, a sceptred one.

His name is one significant of peace.

He is to become the monitor of the nations (peoples).

A Brilliant Ruler. Strange as it may seem, that God should speak by the mouth of a non-Israelitish prophet, God did use such an one to utter a beautiful Messianic prediction. Balaam of Aram, in Mesopotamia, who was a weak character, but who knew the true God, was employed by Balak, king of the Moabites, to curse Israel. Thrice had he attempted to curse Israel, but in each instance the intended curse proved to be a blessing. Finally yielding himself to the operations of the Spirit of God, he spake these words:

"There shall come a Star out of Jacob,
And a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel
* * * * *

30 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

And out of Jacob shall one have dominion,
And shall destroy the remnant from the city."

—Num. 24: 17-19.

This prediction had its fulfilment in David, who did according to the further items of the prophecy,—smite Moab and Edom; but it looked forward to "David's greater Son." From early times Jewish commentators have looked upon this as a Messianic prophecy, and Christians see in it a prediction of their Brilliant Ruler, the King of Kings. This utterance from the lips of a non-Jewish prophet may be looked upon as a forecast of the fact, that not only the Jewish, but Gentile world, as well, should some day recognise in this "Star" the world's truly great and brilliant ruler. When "His star" did appear, it led to the feet of the infant son of Jacob, wise men, representatives of the non-Jewish world, who did Him honour as the "sceptred one."

THE MESSIANIC HOPE IN THE INSTITUTIONS.

Besides these word utterances, from the mouth of the Lord, Himself, and inspired men, the Pentateuch has an abundance of Messianic teaching in symbol and Institutions,⁶ among which are the following:

The Sanctuary (Tabernacle).

The Priesthood.

⁶ See the Author's volume entitled "Old Testament Messages of the Christ," Chapters I-IV.

The Sacrificial System.

The Law.

The Sanctuary with its apartments, its furnishings, even the materials with which it and its furniture were constructed, speaks a distinctly Messianic message. It was God's redeeming presence in the world.

The Priesthood, centering in the high priest, was an institution symbolising the Great High Priest who was to come.

The Sacrificial System, with its various sacrifices, pointed as certainly to the redemptive work of the Coming One, as the needle of the compass points toward the north star.

The Law was an objective measuring stick, which revealed to man God's requirements of him, which he would never be able to meet unless some special dispensation of grace should be manifested. It was an institution with no outlook but upwards, whose only justification was the Messianic provision.

Moses' Successor. A concluding Messianic passage in the Pentateuch is that in which Moses promised Israel a prophet like unto himself, unto whom they would hearken:

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."

—*Deut.* 18:15.

32 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

It is evident to all Old Testament readers, that this prophet was Joshua, but it was Messianic in that it also pertained to Christ. So the passage was interpreted by Peter in Acts 3:22 and by Stephen in Acts 7:37.

It should be noted that, in the Messianic prospect, already in the Pentateuch there is a mingling of royalty and priesthood, of glory and suffering. The idea of royalty and glory may be said to predominate in the spoken prophecy, while the idea of priesthood and suffering may be said to predominate in the institutions. Here we find a combination of material and spiritual prospects, which, though perfectly consistent when properly understood, are very perplexing when confused.

Summarising the development of the Messianism of the Pentateuch, we have the following:

Of the Seed or Posterity of the Woman.

Of Semitic Stock.

A Son of Abraham.

Judah's Descendant.

A Brilliant Ruler.

One Whose Work was Typified by the
Institutions.

A Successor of Moses.

Before going further, it would be well to check ourselves up to see whether we are proceeding in the right direction in our study. Is Messianism the

subject of the Pentateuch, or is it to be found there only incidentally? While there is Hebrew history in the Pentateuch, it is there only because it is necessary to write Hebrew history in order that the story of redemption may be written. Occasionally other nations are cited in the narrative, but they are seen only as they come into contact with the chosen nation. The Old Testament does not purport to be a history of the race, but a recounting of the redeeming work of God, and everything is made tributary to that. The sacred Historian subordinates everything to this all-occupying theme, and permits men, nations and things to appear only as they relate to it.

Christ gives us the answer to our question as to the subject of the Pentateuch. A word from His lips, properly understood, should be sufficient to settle the question as to the relation of these prophecies and institutions to the Messianic hope.

There are two persons whose names stand out in this period very significantly: Abraham and Moses. Abraham was the father of the chosen nation, and Moses was the great deliverer and law-giver. Of Abraham Jesus said: "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). Of Moses He said: "He wrote of me" (John 5:46). While Jesus does not tell us at which one or more of the wonderful experiences

34 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

that came into the life of Abraham he saw the Messiah, He certainly does make it plain, that this man of faith, the father of the nation chosen to be the conservators of a monotheistic faith and through whom the Messiah was to come, saw His day and rejoiced. It may have been when the promises were repeated to him, when the Jehovah angel visited him, or when, in his heart, he had sacrificed Isaac and the ram was provided as a substitution, but in some very real way, he saw the Messiah. Here we learn that the things concerning which Moses wrote were of such a character, that in them he wrote of Christ. Whether of prophecy, history, institutions of sacrifice and worship, or of the law, Moses wrote, it was of Christ, for they all point to and relate to Him.

From the nature of the covenant which God made with Abraham, it is very natural that the deliverer would be looked for in the line of Abraham's descendants. In the covenant, itself, blessing was promised to all nations, but this blessing was to be expected only in the line of Abraham.

POST-PENTATEUCHAL REFERENCES

There is at least one instance in the Historical Books, when history-making is punctuated with prophecy. It is where the prophet Nathan appeared to David, and announced to him some things which have a very direct bearing upon the form

which the Messianic hope was to take. These are the significant words :

“When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of thy kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure forever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever.”

—2 Sam. 7: 12-16.

No matter what our theories of prophetic interpretation may be, there are two things which must be conceded from this prophecy.

1. It has a direct reference to Solomon, for it was he who, as David's son, builded a house to the name of Jehovah.
2. It has reference to Christ, for Gabriel cites this promise of an eternal kingdom of David, to Mary, when he announced to her the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:32, 33).
3. A third thing, the chastening and bearing of stripes, may seem at first as inconsistent with royalty, but can be readily recognised as Messianic when we have combined the ideas

36 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

of humility and glory, suffering and reigning, which must be done if we would come to understand the subject.

Dr. William A. Smith says, that David understood Nathan's prophecy as Messianic, as is evidenced by the prayer which he immediately offered, and the other Messianic sentiments to which he gave expression.⁷

Besides this prophecy cited from 2 Samuel, there is another piece of Messianic literature which deserves mention. Right in the midst of the historical books is found couched a beautiful and very wonderful little book, which is refreshing in its Messianism. The Book of Ruth is, indeed, a most perfect piece of literature, a treatise on piety, a romance of Providence with God's hand to be seen at every turn in the narrative, but still more: it is the book of the Kinsman Redeemer. It tells the story of a worthy and willing near-kin (Hebrew, Goale), redeeming an unworthy but trustful and obedient dependent. While it is not to be insisted, that Ruth understood the Messianic type of which she was a central figure, the book must be understood as Messianic; Boaz, the Lord of the harvest, becoming the bridegroom of Ruth, the bride. Here, in type, is Christ and the church. To subtract this little book from the Bible would be to sustain a

⁷ "Old Testament History," p. 438.

distinct loss. At a date so early as this, God caused to be put into type this mystical relationship between Christ and the church. G. Campbell Morgan's simple outline of the Book of Ruth, divides it into three parts: 1. The Choice of Faith. 2. The Venture of Faith. 3. The Reward of Faith.⁸ This outline is appropriate, and in keeping with its Messianic interpretation.

The post-Pentateuchal references add two more items to the summary of Messianic development up to this point in our study:

He was to be a son of David, typified by Solomon.

He was reflected in the Book of Ruth as the Kinsman Redeemer.

OTHER SUGGESTED ORIGINS OF THE MESSIANIC HOPE

Having noted the origin of the Messianic hope, and having traced it thus far in its historical and prophetic aspects, it is necessary that passing notice be given to some modern suggestions concerning the origin of the hope which we have been calling "Messianic."

There are those who insist upon an evolutionary theory of religion, and in keeping with such an idea they cast about for anything which will serve as a prop to support their hypothesis. As a result of

⁸ "The Analysed Bible," Vol. I, p. 115.

38 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

this, some unwarranted and well-nigh amusing conclusions have been drawn. Instead of the miraculous element of the Old Testament which introduces the Messianic hope and directs it at every turn, they profess to have discovered that the Hebrews derived the Messianic idea from some foreign source. The professed sources vary between Babylonia, Egypt and even the Canaanites, in keeping with the prejudices of the advocates.

Perhaps the nearest approach to anything like a parallel to the Messianic literature of the Bible is found in the "Admonitions of Ipuwer," an Egyptian document which dates possibly to 2000 B.C. The Egyptian sage, called Ipuwer, describes the distressed conditions of society, and expresses a longing for the presence of an ideal king. Some writers see in this a parallel to the prophetic conception of the Messiah.

In the first place, the parallel, if any, is very weak. One could read the fragments which have been translated with difficulty into the English, and unless he had been previously instructed, or had a theory to support, he would scarcely be impressed with any likeness of the document to the definitely-expressed Messianic hope of the Old Testament. Speaking of Re, the first Egyptian God, the sage says:

"Where is he today? Is he sleeping? Behold his might is not seen."

This line is possibly the nearest approach to any expression of a future hope, and it appears very far-fetched to draw any conclusion of a Messianic parallel from this line. The document, as a whole, constitutes a very weak argument in favor of the Hebrews having derived their Messianic hope from the Egyptians.

Scholars are greatly disagreed in relation to their evaluation of the document. Barton cites Vogelsang, Breasted and Gressman as among those who believe that there is, in some degree, a parallel between it and the conception of the Messiah; but says that Gardiner "has objected that the parallelism is not real, in that there seems to have been in the mind of the Egyptian sage no expectation that such a king would actually arise, but rather the belief that he once existed as the god Re, and has now vanished from the earth." ⁹

With Prof. Gardiner many eminent scholars agree. Whatever belief the orientals may have had of varying ages, their golden age lay behind them. This is likely the true interpretation of the "Admonitions of Ipuwer." Prof. Knudson points out the fact, that the Oriental peoples had a belief in what he calls "world cycles." Concerning these "world cycles" he says: "According to this belief, the world would pass through a certain course,

⁹ "Archæology and the Bible," p. 422.

40 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

would culminate in a great catastrophe, and then return to its previous condition, run the same course, and end again in the same catastrophe. This was to continue indefinitely. There was to be no permanent progress. . . . This conception was current among the Babylonians and Persians, is found in Greece and Rome, and appears in the 'prophetic' texts of the Egyptians. By way of contrast with it, the Messianic hope of the Hebrews introduced the idea of development. When the great cataclysm should come, there would be no reversion to the previous order of things. A new eternal kingdom of God would emerge."¹⁰ He further quotes A. C. Welch as saying: "Even Greek thought never broke away from the Eastern conception of the world cycles until it had been fertilised by the infusion of this Hebrew contribution."¹¹ The fact is, that the so-called "prophetic" texts of the Egyptians are not prophetic at all, but as Knudson says, were written to glorify the reigning monarch."¹²

Apart from this particular document, there is scarcely anything among the literature of the ancients which is worthy of mention. It is futile to search here for the origin of the Messianic hope. Nothing which has yet been discovered justifies

¹⁰ "The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament," pp. 377, 378.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 355.

any expectation that there is anything to be found from which the Hebrews might have borrowed their idea of a coming Messiah. Neither is it necessary that this idea should have been borrowed; for it is in keeping with the very genius of this hope which so far transcends anything that is human, that it should have been given by revelation.

The most critical of students are justified in proceeding to trace the progress of the Messianic hope as revealed to Israel, without giving any further heed to suggestions of the origin of the Messianic hope from other sources.

CHAPTER II

THE MESSIANIC HOPE IN THE PSALMS

Basing our expectations upon the authority and unity of the Scriptures, assuming that they reflect the progress which God made in revealing His plan and purpose to His people, we would naturally expect to find intimations, inferences and direct statements concerning the Messianic hope throughout the Scriptures. In this we are not disappointed, for the Messianic hope is referred to or implied, in one manner or another, at practically every turn.

The examination of a few outstanding Psalms will indicate the nature of the Messianism to be found there. Perhaps more Messianism has been read into the Psalms than is really there, but there is much in them which is distinctly Messianic, and it is folly to ignore this fact. We should be disappointed, indeed, if this great collection of Psalms did not make a definite contribution to the unfolding Messianic hope of the Bible. But there is no occasion for disappointment, as will be seen when a number of Psalms have been examined. Surprising as it might seem to those who have never given

The Messianic Hope in the Psalms 43

the subject a careful study, so freighted are the Psalms with Messianism, that a number of the outstanding events in Christ's experiences are reflected there.

THE PSALM OF BETRAYAL

(Forty-first)

Unless the apostles, with Peter as their spokesman, were mistaken in their interpretation of this Psalm when a successor to Judas was being elected (Acts 1:16), the betrayal of Jesus is portrayed here.

“Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted,
which did eat of my bread,
Hath lifted up his heel against me.
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon me and raise
me up,
That I may requite them.
By this I know that thou delightest in me,
Because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.”
—*Psalm* 49:9-11.

THE CRUCIFIXION PSALM

(Twenty-second)

The fact cannot escape the casual reader, much less the student of the Word, that there is a relation of the twenty-second Psalm to the crucifixion. Here are the outstanding points of relationship:

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the
words of my groaning?”

—*Verse* 1.

44 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

As will be seen from Matt. 27:45, 46 and Mark 15:34, Jesus exclaimed these identical words, in part, on the cross.

“All they that see me laugh me to scorn:
They shoot up the lip, they shake the head, saying,
Commit thyself unto Jehovah; let him deliver him:
Let him rescue him, seeing that he delighteth in him.”
—*Verses 7 and 8.*

The three synoptic writers relate the pathetic scene of Christ on the cross, being upbraided by the passers-by and their priests. Here is Matthew's version of it:

“And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God.”
—*Matt. 27:39-43.*

The relationship between the two following Scripture passages needs no comment.

“They part my garments among them,
And upon my vesture do they cast lots.”
—*Verses 18.*

John tells us how the soldiers divided the garments of Jesus when they had crucified Him:

The Messianic Hope in the Psalms 45

"The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts; to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be."—*John* 19:23, 24.

He then adds, that the conduct of the soldiers was a fulfilment of the Scripture—the one which we have just quoted (*Psalms* 22:18).

THE RESURRECTION PSALM

(Sixteenth)

There is at least one Psalm which can be characterised as a resurrection Psalm, although some are inclined to look upon it as pertaining to immortality, generally. The particular passages which touch the resurrection are as follows:

"I have set Jehovah always before me:
Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth:
My flesh also shall dwell in safety,
For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol;
Neither will thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption."
tion."

—*Verses* 8-10.

Peter, in the Pentecostal sermon, reviews the arrest, trial, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, and specifically states that David was speaking of Jesus when he uttered the above words (*Acts* 2:22-28).

46 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

THE KING—PRIEST PSALM

(One hundred and tenth)

In this Psalm there is a specific setting forth of the high-priestly, as well the kingly prerogatives of the Messiah.

“Jehovah hath said unto my Lord,
Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out
of Zion:
Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.”
—*Verses 1 and 2.*

“Jehovah hath sworn and will not repent:
Thou art a priest forever,
After the order of Melchizedek.”
—*Verse 4.*

The book of Hebrews, that wonderful New Testament Commentary on Old Testament type and prophecy, thrice quotes the latter verse, interpreting it Messianically, arguing that the New Testament High Priest (Christ) is superior to the highest type of Old Testament high priest, the king-priest, Melchizedek (Heb. 5:6-10; 6:20). Note the prediction in this Psalm, of the priestly function of the expected Messiah (Anointed One).

Christ also cites this Psalm as referring to Himself, as recorded in Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36 and Luke 20:42, 43.

KINGDOM PSALMS

(Second)

That the second Psalm is Messianic is proven by the reference made to it in the prayer of Peter and John, as recorded in Acts 4:23-28. The reference is made to the verses which read as follows:

“Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples meditate a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the Lord and against his anointed.”
—*Verses 1 and 2.*

But the whole Psalm is Messianic, as the following verses and others can only be interpreted in this way:

“Jehovah said unto me, thou art my son;
This day have I begotten thee.
Ask of me and I will give thee the nations
for thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy
possession.”
—*Verses 7 and 8.*

While the first coming of Christ has in a measure fulfilled this prophecy, it is evident that what has come to pass in the spiritual reign of Christ among men is but a foreshadowing of what is yet to be fulfilled when He reigns in power and glory. Some who fail to see the millennial aspect of this Psalm do not hesitate to concede to it a Messianic nature.

48 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

(Eighth)

The eighth Psalm is very wonderful in its Messianic aspects :

“What is man that thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man that thou visitest him?
For thou hast made him but a little lower than
God,
And crownedst him with glory and honor.
Thou makest him to have dominion over the
works of thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet.”

—*Verses 4-6.*

There are three references in the New Testament which cite these words as Messianic. They are I. Cor. 15:24, 25; Eph. 1:22 and Hebrews 2:6-8. The latter reference, in particular, gives it not only a Messianic but possibly a millennial interpretation, as well, for it says:

“Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he subjected all things unto him, he left nothing that is not subject unto him. *But now we see not yet all things subject unto him.* But we behold him who hath been made a little lower than angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every man.

—*Hebrews 2:8, 9.*

The passage is certainly Messianic and its fulfillment reaches out into the eternal kingdom.

Trench, in his work entitled “After the Thousand

Years," gives the following interpretation to these verses from the eighth Psalm: (1) "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels" refers to His incarnation and earthly life. (2) "Thou crownedst him with glory and honor" refers to His exaltation to the heaven where He sits at the right hand of God as man's intercessor. (3) "Thou didst set him over the work of thy hands" refers to His coming millennial reign upon earth. (4) "Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet" refers to His universal reign after the millennium, in the new heavens and the new earth. Any explanation which does not discover the Messianic aspects of this Psalm is an inadequate one.

(Forty-fifth)

No treatment of the Messianism of the Psalms can approximate completeness which does not reckon with the forty-fifth Psalm. While it is not necessarily millennial, it belongs to the kingdom Psalms, and will be mentioned here.

"Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever :
A sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom.
Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness :
Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows."
—Verses 6 and 7.

The Messianism of this Psalm cannot be successfully disputed without attacking the New Testament

50 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

interpretation of it, for in the Book of Hebrews we are specifically told that reference is here made to Christ. This is what is said:

“And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith,
Who maketh his angels winds,
And his ministers a flame of fire:
But of the Son he saith,
Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever;
And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.”

—*Hebrews* 1:6-8.

(Seventy-second)

There are several other Psalms, which are sometimes classed with the kingdom group, but we shall examine only one more, the seventy-second.

“Give the king thy judgments, oh God,
And thy righteousness unto the king's son.
He will judge the people with righteousness,
And the poor with justice.
The mountains shall bring peace to the people,
And the hills in righteousness.
He will judge the poor of the people,
He will save the children of the needy,
And break in pieces the oppressor.
They shall fear thee while the sun endureth,
And so long as the moon throughout all generations.
He will come down like rain upon the mown grass,
As showers that watereth the earth.
In his days shall the righteous flourish,
And abundance of peace till the moon be no more.
He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the River unto the ends of the earth.”

—*Verses* 1-8.

The Messianic Hope in the Psalms 51

This Psalm is accredited to Solomon, and certainly predicts a future time when a greater than Solomon shall sit upon the throne, rule the world, and shall dispense blessings both material and spiritual.

The Century Bible has an interesting comment on this passage: "The Psalm is ideal throughout, Messianic, in the sense that God's anointed one is depicted, not as he so often was in fact, but as he ought to be, as the Psalmist hopes he one day will be. Hence prayer merges in prophecy. . . . This glowing description of God's vice-gerent on earth is best read without primary reference to Solomon, Hezekiah, or Ptolemy Philadelphus, but as a prophetic prayer, already partly fulfilled after a fashion the Psalmist never expected, partly still awaiting fulfilment—though the time and manner of that ultimate realisation are beyond human presage and conjecture."¹

Special note should be made of the spiritual aspect of the prophecy: "righteousness," "justice," "like rain," "peace," etc. It is of this Psalm that Dr. William A. Smith says: "The blessings predicted for the reign of Solomon form a transparent veil for the transcendent glories prophesied for Christ's kingdom."²

¹ Century Bible Psalms, Vol. I., p. 351.

² "Old Testament History," p. 467.

52 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

While the literalness of the kingdom idea is quite prevalent in the Messianism of the Psalms, the spiritual idea is also present, as is evidenced by the figures employed; the promise of righteousness, peace, justice and the type of the priesthood. The royalty of the Messianic Psalms may have a first reference to Solomon, and may have been partially fulfilled in him, but cannot have their complete fulfilment in anyone less than the Messiah, of whom Solomon may be, in his royalty, a type. Here, too, we find the material and spiritual aspects, the local and distant things, shading themselves off into each other in a way that we would find difficulty in separating them if we should try.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MESSIANIC PSALMS

Some of the Psalms were written about the time of David and Solomon, not far from one thousand B. C. When studied with regard to their Messianic concept, they are found to represent a distinct advance over the Messianic utterances of the earlier writings. This is perfectly in keeping with the idea of a progressive unfolding of the Messianic hope. We should be disappointed if it were not so.

In commenting upon the Messianic Psalm, James M. Gray says: "In these Psalms the Messiah is not only referred to, but He, Himself, in the Spirit is heard to speak. It is His feelings and experiences

that are being expressed rather than those of the human author. In the Gospels we read what He said and did, and what was said and done to Him; in other words, we obtain a view of the outside of His life, but in the Psalms we see the inner side, and learn how He felt and how He lived in the presence of His God and Father." "Often it is recorded of Him in the Gospels, that He repaired to His Father—spent whole nights in prayer, but no intimation is given of the substance of His prayers. Here in the Psalms, however, some of these secret prayers are, as it were, published in advance. The Psalms, indeed, have been called the prayer-book of Jesus." ³

The above-mentioned author also quotes a French writer, M. E. Guers, as follows: "Elsewhere the sacred authors speak to us of Jesus—of His vicarious sufferings and His bitter agony; but here it is Himself that we hear. It is He who complains, who sighs and groans beneath the hand of 'the prince of the power of the air' and of his instruments. It is He who trembles beneath the weight of God's anger; it is He, Himself, who initiates us into all His fears, all His alarms, all His terrors, and all His moral and physical tortures. In the New Testament we see only glimpses of the terrible combats of His Soul; in the Psalms we see His anguish." ⁴

³ and ⁴ "Synthetic Bible Studies," p. 57.

54 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

EXTRA POETIC- LITERATURE MESSIANISM

Apart from the Messianism of the Psalms, there are many other beautiful passages in the Poetic Books, which deserve mention, but inasmuch as it is the *progress* of the unfolding of the Messianic hope that we are tracing, and these are not necessary to this, many of them may be passed without attention. One more will be cited.

The Songs of Songs is the one Old Testament book which reflects to the occidental mind almost extravagantly, but to the oriental more appropriately, the idea of true bridal and conjugal love. Whether it was love reciprocated by Solomon and the Shulamite or by her shepherd lover and the Shulamite, we cannot be certain. But unless the book contained more than a mere veiled romance of love, it would be unworthy of its place in the Old Testament canon of Scriptures. It is a symbol and reflex of God's love for His people Israel, and of Christ for the New Testament church. Even this little poetic book is not wanting in its Messianic implications, as we now look back upon its character.

RÉSUMÉ

Gathering up the outstanding items of progress in the unfolding of the Messianic hope, we obtain the following: He was to be

Of the posterity of the woman.

Of Semitic Stock.

A son of Abraham.

Judah's Descendant.

A Brilliant Ruler.

One Whose Work was Typified by the
Institutions.

A Successor to Moses.

A son of David Typified by Solomon.

The Kinsman Redeemer.

A King-Priest.

A World-wide Potentate.

The Lover-bridegroom.

CHAPTER III

THE MESSIANIC HOPE IN THE PROPHECIES

The Dual Aspect of Prophecy. As indicated previously, the Messianic hope comprehended a two-fold aspect of the work of the deliverer—a material and a spiritual or a kingly and sacrificial. The progress to be made in the unfolding of this hope may be expected to augment both of these, to the confusion of the student of prophecy, unless they are properly related. Should it appear that the materialistic aspect predominates, it is not a matter of surprise, for the prophecies were written during the decline, fall and captivity of the Jewish nation, and the period when after the return from captivity they were struggling against odds in an effort to establish a Jewish state.

But it will be found that the spiritual aspect receives much emphasis at the hands of the literary (writing) prophets. These two aspects—the material and the spiritual—will be found not to contradict each other, but to supplement each other, if properly understood.

A Double Reference. It may have been observed

The Messianic Hope in the Prophecies 57

before now, that use has been made several times of a law in the interpretation of prophetic utterances which may be called a double reference. By this it is meant, that a particular prophecy may have a near, partial, local fulfilment, but that it may also have a more distant and more complete fulfilment. An illustration of this is found in the utterance of Moses, which was previously cited, but is referred to again here for the purpose of making the point clear.

“The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.”

—*Deut.* 18: 15.

It is evident to all readers of the Old Testament that Joshua was the near and partial fulfilment of the promise; but Peter, in his Pentecostal sermon, quotes this 'prophecy as applicable to Christ (Acts 3:22), as does Stephen also, in his defence before the council (Acts 7:37). Peter and Stephen were not in error in their interpretation of this prophetic utterance from the lips of Moses, but they were dealing with the more distant and complete fulfilment of it. Another interesting fact concerning this prophecy is, that Joshua is the Old Testament Hebrew name the New Testament Greek equivalent of which is Jesus, meaning deliverer. This is a simple illustration of the prophetic double reference.

58 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

Since the hermeneutical principle involved in the double reference is so important, and is employed by some and vigorously denounced by others, it is necessary to give careful attention to it.

Dr. Milton S. Terry, in his volume entitled *Biblical Hermeneutics*, has a chapter with the caption: "No Double Sense in Prophecy." This is the most strenuous effort the present author has seen to discredit the hermeneutical principle of the double reference. It is interesting to note, however, that while labouring to set aside the "double sense," as he calls it, he is obliged to concede it, for he says: "We reject as unsound and misleading the theory that such Messianic Psalms as the second, forty-fifth and seventy-second have a double sense and refer first to David, Solomon or some other ruler, and secondly to Christ. If an historical reference to some great, typical character can be shown, the whole case may be relegated to Biblical typology; the language naturally explained of the person celebrated in the Psalm, and then the person himself may be shown to be a type and illustration of a greater one to come. After this manner the great events referred to in the Immanuel prophecy of Isa. 7:14, and the calling of Israel out of Egypt in Hosea, were typically fulfilled in Jesus."¹ He further says, that the judgment of Babylon, or

¹ "Biblical Hermeneutics," p. 383.

The Messianic Hope in the Prophecies 59

Nineveh, or Jerusalem may, indeed, be a type of every other similar judgment, and is a warning to all nations and ages." But he claims that this is a very different thing from the so-called double sense or reference.

It would appear as though Dr. Terry is fighting an imaginary or straw man, for it makes but little difference whether the language refers to two things which may be its fulfilment, or to one thing which in turn becomes the type of another. The principle involved is exactly the same. So whether we call it a "double reference" or single reference which refers to one thing, which in turn refers to another, the principle is established by the testimony of both friend and foe of the law of the prophetic double reference. Instead of the use of the law leading to confusion and error, as the author quoted claims, it is a principle of prophetic interpretation which others use cheerfully and he, himself, unwillingly, to clear up some otherwise dark prophetic utterances.

The Prophetic Perspective. To get an intelligent understanding of prophecy, the student must have an appreciation of the perspective of prophecy.

In the first place, minutest details are not to be expected in prophecy, which God has intended as an outline, rather than a detailed delineation. There are some things which God purposely withheld from

60 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

His prophetic picture, relating to the present and the future. Where God omits details, we should not dogmatise upon them.

Another fact which must be reckoned with in the study of prophecy is, that in some instances centuries or even millenniums are spanned with a comma. An illustration of this is found in Isa. 61:1, 2:

“The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of Jehovah’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.”

When Jesus used these verses as a text for His Capernaum sermon, He stopped reading at the comma preceding the phrase, “and the day of vengeance of our God,” closed the book and said:

“Today hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears.”

—*Luke 4:18.*

Jesus stopped reading the text at the comma, for had He not done so—had He read across the comma—He could not have said unqualifiedly: “Today *hath* this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears,” for the “day of vengeance” was then at least almost nineteen hundred years away. This shows

The Messianic Hope in the Prophecies 61

how, in some instances, centuries and sometimes even milleniums are spanned, in prophecy, by only a comma. This has a tendency to make the time element one of the most disturbing things in the interpretation of prophecy.

In keeping with the above and consistent with the idea of a progressive revelation, some of the later prophets, at least, may be expected to speak more fully and clearly upon the one great subject of prophecy, the Messianic hope. As God's messengers, their utterances would be consistent with the advanced day in which they spoke. Thus, the later prophets may be expected to give a more detailed delineation of the Messiah than was given in any earlier period. In the prophecy of Isaiah alone, Dr. Terry believes that he can see progress and says: "In this single series we discover a marked progress of thought from what is at first broad and comparatively indefinite to what is more specific and personal."² In this there is nothing surprising, as Isaiah is recognised as the great evangelical prophet. Speaking in a figure, the earlier Old Testament furnishes a tin-type of the Messiah, the later Old Testament a cabinet-sized portrait, while the life-sized portrait is reserved for the New Testament period.

² "Biblical Hermeneutics," p. 328.

62 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

IN ISAIAH

A Judge of Nations. "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah. And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins. And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; and their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."

—*Isa. 11: 1-9.*

"And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

—*Isa. 2: 4.*

The Messianic Hope in the Prophecies 63

The above prophecies relate to a time to which the whole Christian world has been looking forward to for fulfilment. The universal dissemination of the knowledge of the Lord and universal peace are things greatly desired by all. Some think of the dissemination of the knowledge of the Lord purely as a result of missionary effort. Others have thought that the coming of universal peace would result from the world's peace movements, peace conferences, peace treaties, etc.

In the glorious day predicted here, whenever it shall come to pass, conditions are to be radically changed. Not only shall war have ceased, but other things will have marvelously changed. The prophecy couples the domestic animal with its present beast of prey, and pictures them in peace. The carnivorous (flesh-eating) animal, the lion, is represented as having become herbivorous (herb-eating) like the ox. It is a period which will partake of the nature of the present imperfect state and also the future, perfect state, but in which the world is striding toward the perfect eternal state. It is a period when right shall become dominant as sin now is.

That the time promised in the prophecy is not yet present is evident to thinking people. Of the seventeen hundred million people who inhabit our earth, only about two-thirds have ever heard the

64 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

name of Christ or have come into touch with the Gospel. The much-desired universal peace has not yet appeared, for treaties have been and will likely continue to be treated as "scraps of paper." Implements of war have not yet been discarded. As long as the hearts of men remain unregenerated, outbursts of savagery may be expected at any time.

The prophet, however, saw the described conditions coming to pass only in connection with the Messianic hope and Messianic reign. In the light of the recent tragedy of civilisation, who can blame those in whose best judgment the only remedy for the evil condition of the world lies in some other definite and positive achievement in the Messianic program, than that which has been hitherto experienced? Dr. Geo. L. Robinson, of McCormick Theological Seminary, expressed this sentiment, when before a class of theological students, as a befitting climax to a discussion on world conditions, exclaimed: "Men, what the world needs is not more democracy; what it needs is theocracy."

The Gentile's Quest and Light. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations (Gentiles) seek; and his resting place shall be glorious."

—*Isa.* II: 10.

"I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give

The Messianic Hope in the Prophecies 65

thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."

—*Isa.* 42:6.

"I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

—*Isa.* 49:6.

In these prophecies is seen one who should not only be attractive to the Jews, but one who should be sought by the Gentiles to whom he would be the light. Here the breaking of the bounds of Judaism for the Messiah is definitely anticipated. Aged Simeon recognised the infant Jesus as having a relation to these prophecies, and quoted from them (Luke 2:32). John tells of the Greeks who made the initial quest to "see Jesus" (John 12:20), and the Gentile world has never ceased to seek Him, more or less diligently.

A Virgin's Son. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

—*Isa.* 7:14.

It is impossible to read this verse thoughtfully, noting its prediction of a virgin's son arising to such prominence as to be called "Immanuel" (God with us), without being impressed by the fact, that it sustains some close relation to the "Prō-tē"-van-gél-i-um" of Gen. 3:15. It was the "seed (posterity)

66 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

of the woman" who became the hope of the world in that early prophecy, and it is the virgin's son who is to be "God with us" (Immanuel), as predicted by Isaiah. The Angel of the Lord quoted Isaiah's prophecy in explanation of the birth of Jesus, to Joseph, as is recorded in Matt. 1:23. There is an intimation of the virgin birth in the first Messianic prophecy (Gen. 3:15), and, it will be noted, this idea persists both in prophecy, and in history which is the fulfilment of prophecy, throughout the Bible.

The Divine King. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth and even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this."

—Isa. 9:6, 7.

No one can justly question the Messianic content of these verses. Using what is called the prophetic present tense, the prophet writes of an event which is yet seven hundred years in the future, as though it were being fulfilled before his eyes. Some interpret this prophecy as merely spiritual. The Jews interpreted it as literal, for there is specific reference

The Messianic Hope in the Prophecies 67

to his sitting upon the throne of David. In the light of previous prophetic utterances it should be noted, that there is no contradiction between the spiritual and literal in the Messianic hope, if properly understood, for it embraces both. The thing which is necessary, but which men have failed and still fail to do, is to get the proper conception of these two aspects as they relate to the Messianic program.

Jehovah's Servant. "Behold my servant shall deal wisely, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Like as many were astonished at thee (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of man), so shall he sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which they had not been told them they shall see; and that which they had not heard shall they understand."

—*Isa.* 52: 13-15.

The question as to the identity of Jehovah's Servant in Isaiah is an interesting one, for it has a direct bearing upon the Messianism of the prophecy. There are those who interpret the Servant as being Israel. Rufus M. Jones suggests that it refers to a "remnant" within Israel.³ Still others contend that it refers to some unnamed, suffering individual among the people of Israel.

There can only be a measure of truth in either suggestion, as there can be no evasion of the fact,

³ "The Remnant," p. 24.

68 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

that in the light of subsequent fulfilment of the prophecy, there was only one who could qualify as Jehovah's Servant—the Messiah. In the sense of a first reference, and in that sense only, it may refer to Israel as a whole, a remnant of Israel, or an unnamed sufferer within Israel.

Delitzsch points out what he calls "Servant Poems."⁴ There are four of them. The first one is found in Isa. 42:1-9; the second in Isa. 49:1-13; the third in Isa. 50:4-11, and the fourth in Isa. 52:13-53:12.

In the first poem, the "Servant" appears as a person, spirit-filled, and having a mission to the Gentiles. In the second, Israel appears to be personified, called from the mother's womb, a light to the Gentiles, and the instrument of salvation to the end of the earth. In the third poem, the "Servant" speaks in the first person, declaring his submission; having given his back to the smiters, his cheeks to those who plucked off the hair, and having not hidden his face from shame and spitting. He is one who was made perfect through suffering. The fourth poem includes Isa. 52:13-15, quoted above, and the whole of the fifty-third chapter. Here the "Servant" is seen dying vicariously; meek and patient.

⁴ Delitzsch, "Commentary on Isaiah," Vol. II, p. 165.

The Messianic Hope in the Prophecies 69

His Vicarious Death. (Isaiah, Fifty-third).

"He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not."

—*Verse 3.*

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

—*Verses 10-12.*

"He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

—*Verses 7-9.*

"Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous justify many;

70 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

—*Verses 10-12*

Here is a very marvelous and minutely detailed delineation of the voluntary, vicarious and redemptive sufferings of the Messiah. It is not worth our while to note even some of the unwarranted suggestions which are made by certain critics, concerning this portion of prophecy, by which they becloud and even destroy its meaning. One of the strange things, however, is, that men will try to adjust this picture to every other person or event, rather than to the Messiah and His work, whose description it is. This error is the result of one or more of the following things:

1. A failure to reckon with the facts and consequences of sin.
2. An inadequate conception of the Messianic hope and its necessary content.
3. An overlooking of the fact of a progressive revelation.
4. A desire to eliminate the supernatural or predictive element from prophecy, or to ignore the Messianic.

There is one question which deserves our atten-

The Messianic Hope in the Prophecies 71

tion: the question of the inclusiveness of the prophecy. Who are meant by the first personal pronouns "our" and "we" of the prophecy? While the speaker was a Jew, and these pronouns refer primarily to that nation, we have seen that the "Servant" had a specific mission to the Gentiles (Isa. 42:6 and 49:6), and was to be the instrument of salvation to the end of the earth (Isa. 49:6); therefore Jew and Gentile—the whole world is included. Geo. Adam Smith says: "The art of the poem seems intentionally to leave vague the national relation of the speakers to the Servant, in order the more impressively to bring out their moral attitude to him. There is an utter disappearance of all lines of separation between Jew and Gentile, . . . as if the writer wished us to feel that all men stood over against that solitary Servant in a common indifference to his suffering and a common conscience of the guilt he bears." ⁵

It should be noted, that no attention is given to the glory which is to belong to the Servant, or to any material blessing which He is to bring, but to the voluntary, vicarious and redemptive suffering which He is to endure and the spiritual blessings which are to result therefrom. Humiliation is the burden of this portion of the prophecy, just as glory

⁵ The Expositor's Bible, Isaiah, Vol. II, pp. 349, 350.

72 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

is the outstanding note of other portions of prophetic utterance.

One of the arguments used against the Messianic interpretation of this passage is, that in all Jewish literature in the time of Isaiah and previous, there is no expressed conception of a suffering Messiah. But this proves nothing, except the superiority of the Scriptures over Jewish literature. A prophet sees infinitely more than a mere writer of literature can see.

The Anointed One. "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified."

—*Isa.* 61: 1-3.

Jesus specifically claims this passage as referring to Himself; therefore there can be no question as to its Messianic nature. The "anointed" one is what His name signifies, being the Messiah of the Old Testament and the Christ of the New, both names meaning "anointed."

The Messianic Hope in the Prophecies 73

The Solitary Hero Triumphant. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozra? this that is glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the vinevat. I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the peoples there was no one with me; yea, I trod them in anger, and trampled them in my wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore my own arm brought salvation unto me; and my wrath, it upheld me. And I trod down the peoples in mine anger, and made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."

—*Isa.* 63: 1-3.

This passage has been variously interpreted; sometimes as having no Messianic import. Geo. Adam Smith and others think that Jehovah, Himself, is referred to.⁶ But the Messianism shines through the picture. It is a solitary battle hero who comes forth a mighty Conqueror. Whatever else it may mean, it certainly reflects the lone-handed struggle of the Saviour of Men, from which He came forth clothed with salvation and triumph. Here suffering and glory are again linked together in the usual order.

⁶ "Expositor's Bible," Isaiah, Vol. II, p. 442.

74 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

As a closing word relative to the Prophecy of Isaiah, it should be mentioned, that no effort has been made to exhaust the Messianism of the book. There are other passages which are Messianic besides those referred to, but a sufficient number has been quoted to indicate the various aspects of the Messianic hope entertained, also to note the progress which was made up to and including the time of that prophet. The idea of sacrifice is present, as well as the idea of royalty. The Messianism of Isaiah links very definitely the ideas of suffering and reigning. It might be said, that the sacrificial idea becomes more predominant toward the close of the prophecy, but both are pronounced throughout. There is no surprise that Isaiah stands out as the evangelical prophet of the Old Testament. Had the Jews of Christ's day understood Isaiah, they would have had a conception of their Messiah altogether different from that which they held in the day that He came. Could the Jews of to-day have Isaiah's vision of their Messiah, as one who was both to suffer and to reign, they would recognise Him who was crucified, as their King, though as yet uncrowned. And could some of the present day teachers of prophecy get Isaiah's perspective on the Messianic program, they would cease to be confused with the two aspects of His mission, those of suffering and reigning, and would recognise the

The Messianic Hope in the Prophecies 75

purpose of His coming to earth to have been that of suffering, only, and not that of enthronement.

IN MICAH

The brief prophecy of Micah makes a significant contribution to the Messianism of the Old Testament, for it points out the place where the deliverer was to be born.

Out of Bethlehem. "And thou Bethlehem, Ephrathah, which art little among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting."

—*Micah 5:2.*

It was this passage which made it possible for the chief priests and scribes to answer Herod's question, where Christ was born (Matt. 2:6). Thus it was written in the prophecy of Micah.

IN ZECHARIAH

The King-Priest. "Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Jehovah; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

—*Zechariah 6:12, 13.*

Here again the royal and priestly functions are united, indicating that he, whose name is the

76 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

“Branch,” is to combine in his person the offices of both king and priest; is to reign and to suffer.

One Sold for a Price. “And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my hire; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver. And Jehovah said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, and the goodly price that I was prized at by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them unto the potter, in the house of Jehovah.”

Matthew cites this prophecy as having been fulfilled when Judas sold his Lord for the same number of silver pieces, and having rued the bargain, returned the money to the priests and elders, after which it was used to buy the potter’s field (*Matt.* 27:9, 10).

The Pierced One. “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look unto me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for an only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.”

—*Zech.* 12:10.

The Opened Fountain. “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness.”

—*Zech.* 13:1.

IN MALACHI

Malachi was the last messenger of the old dispensation. When the echo of his prophetic message

The Messianic Hope in the Prophecies 77

died away there was silence for the period of four hundred years. In these references there is a unique mixing of the material and spiritual aspects of the Messianic hope, with the spiritual predominating.

A Refiner. "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple, and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts. But who can abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; and he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness."

—*Mal.* 3: 1-3.

The Sun of Righteousness. "For, behold, the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace; and all the proud, and all that work wickedness, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith Jehovah of hosts, that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings."

—*Mal.* 4: 1 and 2.

CONCLUDING NOTE

In the sketching of the development of the Messianic hope in the Old Testament it is not the intention to quote or even cite all the passages which have a Messianic aspect. There are many more, both in the Prophecies from which quotations are

78 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

made, as well as others. Rather than to deal with all the Messianic passages, it is the motive here to call attention to the nature of the prophecies which cannot be other than Messianic, and to show that there is real and indisputable progress in the revelation which God made toward a manifestation of Himself to the world in the person of His Divine Son, Jesus Christ.

It is important that students of Old Testament Messianism keep in mind the two outstanding aspects: the sacrificial and the kingly. It was the latter which attracted the attention and occupied the minds of the declining Jewish nation; so much so, that they could not harmonise a suffering Messiah with a royal son of David. Kingship and priesthood, contradictory as it may seem to the casual student, are associated throughout the Old Testament; and as it is the sacrificial which stands out in the first intimation of the Messiah's coming (Gen. 3:15), students do well to keep this aspect well in the forefront of their thinking.

It should also be noted, that Messianism in prophetic utterances is likely to be found in practically all connections. It is as though the Messianic hope shines not only when all is going well with Israel, but also between every rift in the clouds of her political and moral sky. It should be constantly kept in mind, that Messianism is the one subject

The Messianic Hope in the Prophecies 79

of the Old Testament, and whether it be in its history or prophecy, poetry or prose, that hope shines out between the lines as the all-important theme.

SUMMARY

Summarising the results of our investigation of the progress made in relation to the Messianic hope in the Old Testament, the following results are obtained concerning the Deliverer: He was to be

Of the Posterity of the Woman.

Of Semitic Stock.

A Son of Abraham.

Judah's Descendant.

A Brilliant Ruler.

One Whose Work was Typified by the Institutions.

A Successor to Moses.

A Son of David Typified by Solomon.

The Kinsman Redeemer.

A King-Priest.

A World-Wide Potentate.

The Lover-Bridegroom.

The Judge of Nations.

The Gentile's Quest and Light.

The Virgin's Son.

The Divine King.

Jehovah's Servant, Dying Vicariously.

The Anointed One.

80 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

The Solitary, but Triumphant Hero.

Of Bethlehem Birth.

One Sold for a Price.

The Pierced One.

An Opened Fountain.

A Refiner.

The Sun of Righteousness.

At this stage of the Messianic development, with its mingling of royal and sacrificial elements, the Old Testament comes to a close. The only change, if any, between its close and the opening of the New Testament, will be that which was effected during the period between the Testaments, of approximately four hundred years. The books of the Old Testament Apochrypha and profane history must be consulted to trace any progress made within this period.

CHAPTER IV

MESSIANIC EXPECTATION OUTSIDE OF JUDAISM

While there can be traced a Messianic hope and a development of that hope within Israel, the nation whom God took into His own confidence and communicated to them His purpose and plan, it must not be forgotten that the other peoples of the earth were experiencing the same desires, though they were unable to express them in the same terms. In Israel the desire became hope, while among the other peoples desire became more desire.

The Old Testament which does not purport to be a history of the race nor of the Jews, as such, but an account of God's redemptive movements in behalf of the world, does not deal with nations outside of Israel, except incidentally. But it is interesting to note, that these incidental references have sufficient evidence to prove that other nations had some knowledge of God, and other hearts were reaching up for His love and fellowship. A Melchizedek, whose genealogy and achievements are unknown to us, was God's king-priest, and became a type of Christ. Balaam of Pethor, though proving himself

82 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

unworthy of God's continued blessing and help, evidently knew the true God. Rahab, the Canaanite, was saved by accepting the faith of the Israelites; and Ruth, the Moabitess was injected into the ancestral line of David by choosing the God of the chosen people. Cornelius, the Gentile, eagerly heard the word concerning Christ when it began to be published throughout Judea and Galilee (Acts 10:37, 38), and was found a believer ready for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, just as soon as God had prepared one who was willing to go and bear the message of full salvation to him. Jacob, in the patriarchal blessing bestowed upon Judah, indicated, that he who should arise from among his descendants would be sought by the nations, or Gentiles (Gen. 49:10). Isaiah, the great evangelical prophet, declared that Jehovah's Servant should not only be a restorer of Israel, but a light to the Gentiles, and that His salvation should be to the end of the earth (Isa. 49:6). Haggai saw beyond the boundaries of Israel, and recognised the universal claim upon the Messiah, and said: "The desire of all nations shall come" (Haggai 2:7).

Turning our eyes toward the Gentile world, we find that no prophet had ever exaggerated its interest in and desire for help from a source external to itself. As far back as the history of the human race can be traced, even in its dimmer outlines, man's

Messianic Expectation Outside of Judaism 83

chief quest has been for God. This is true in relation to the people out from whom Israel was called, the Semites, as well as it has been true of every nation before that time and since. There were varied expressions of that desire, but they all testify to man's quest after God. Zoroaster, who lived about seven centuries before Christ, and whose name one of the oriental religions bears, while contemplating God, is reported to have declared, that God could never be known unless He would reveal Himself in human form. This declaration from the lips of a founder of an oriental, heathen religion is striking, and almost amounts to a prophecy, for no revelation short of this could ever have made God adequately known to the world.

A study of the Graeco-Roman world, where civilisation struggled to its highest point religiously, as well as in many other ways, discloses how nearly the Gentile world approached the truth. Of the Greeks it has been well said, that they came to the threshold of truth, but could go no further. "Wisdom" had carried them as far as it could go, but gradually they came to feel, that something more than wisdom was necessary. Among the Greeks and Romans can be found many unquestionable expressions and practices which indicate Gentile longing after God. The Roman cult of emperor worship was the result of a misdirected expectation of

84 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

the incarnation of deity. Greeks and Romans gradually became monotheistic. Prayer became universal. Sacrifice, which is as old as the race, was practised in varying measure. A belief in immortality became quite general. Greek enthusiasts became "street preachers," who sought to apply their philosophies to the needs of their fellowmen. Dying men and women were attended by the philosophers, who sought to give consolation. People approached a real sense of sin. Seneca expressed his sense of the sinfulness of human nature. It is Angus who says, that the Confessions of Augustine of the fourth century is an answer to the demand of Socrates, "Know thyself" (Greek, *γνώσι σεαυτόν*).¹ Both of the Greek poets, Eratus and Cleanthes, expressed sentiments worthy of quotation by Paul to the Athenians on Mar's Hill, when he said: "Your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring." (Acts 17:28). Socrates is reported by Plato to have exclaimed: "Oh that someone would arise, man or God, to show us God!" Seneca questioned: "Where shall he be found whom we have been seeking so many centuries?" The above-named writer speaks of these as: "Voices, crying in the wilderness of Paganism, preparing the way of the Lord."² It is no surprise that God

¹ "The Environment of Early Christianity," p. 80.

² *Ibid.*, p. 78.

could no longer withhold the revelation of Himself to the world, in the light of their strivings to know Him.

All these were unwitting contributions to the preparation of the world for the coming of the Saviour. Besides these spiritual preparations, both the Romans and the Greeks made material contributions. The Romans provided a stable government and built roads, making the propagation of Christianity possible. The Greeks furnished the vehicle of language, upon which the message of salvation could ride to the ends of the earth. Unconscious contributions of the Gentile world to the spread of the Gospel!

The Gentile reaching out after God was well understood by Him. He met man on that threshold of truth where he could proceed no further. If man had gone his longest length to find God, he was still far from finding Him. But God met him where he was. The Greeks, in their philosophy, had coined a word which expressed their highest spiritual conception. It was the word *logos* (Greek, λόγος). To the Greeks this was an unknowable, impersonal something, sometimes used as if to express personality or to differentiate the Creator from the creation. Inspiration caught up this empty category and filled it with a divine content, as if to fill an empty vessel which man's high-

86 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

est wisdom held up to be filled. Changing the figure, the *logos* is made, in the Gospel by John, to mean a living, breathing, pulsating, vitalising personality, the Son of God. It was the *logos*, the "Word," who was declared by John to have been in the beginning, to have shared in the creation of the worlds; to have tabernacled among men, and to have been the world's Redeemer.

While the term *logos* was a term of Greek philosophy, the thought which it expressed was not necessarily one of Greek philosophy, only. The Old Testament writers used certain phrases intended to represent God, not in His absolute being, but in His manifestation to the world, such as "The Angel of the Lord," "The Wisdom of God," etc. Certain scholars believe that Philo of Alexandria, who was a Hellenistic Jew and formulated the doctrine of the *logos*, united two streams of thought; that of the Jewish writers with that of the Greek philosophy.³

In searching for the cause, other than intuition, for such remarkable reaches of the Gentile world after God, perhaps only one historic event needs to be mentioned—the Diaspora (Dispersion). This was the one greatest single factor in the preparation of the world for Christianity. Providently, the Jews had been scattered everywhere. They had

³"Expositor's Greek Testament," Commentary on John, John 1:1, page 684.

Messianic Expectation Outside of Judaism 87

maintained their places of worship, and by so doing pointed the world to one God. They were a praying people, and the pagan world was taught by them to pray. They were a people optimistic in their hope of a better day, and shared this hope, in some small measure at least, with their neighbours. Their hope of immortality could not fail to raise in the bosom of every one with whom they came into contact the question of the future. The Diaspora, in a measure that it is impossible to estimate, helped to bring the world to the fulness of time when God could send His Son to become its Redeemer.

CHAPTER V

THE MESSIANISM OF THE JEWS

The opening pages of the New Testament introduce to us the political condition of the world at the time of the birth of Christ. The Roman Emperor ruled the world, and even Palestine, the home of the Hebrew people, was divided into several Roman provinces, the governors being appointed by and subject to the Roman Government.

THEIR POLITICAL CONDITION

The Jews, whose poets had sung of and whose prophets had predicted a deliverer, were still a suppressed, disorganized and nationless people. They lost their independence with the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The northern kingdom had gone into Assyrian captivity in 722. At the decree of Cyrus, some of them returned to Jerusalem in 536, rebuilt the temple, and later the walls of the city. They were, with a little exception, ruled constantly by foreign nations. First, they were in Assyrian, and later in Babylonian captivity, and later dominated by Persia, Greece and Syria in their turn. Headed by the Maccabees (makkab meaning the hammer), Mattathias and his son Judas, the Jews succeeded,

by a struggle lasting twenty-five years (168 to 143 B.C.) in throwing off the Syrian rule. This period is known in history as the Maccabean period. Simon, the brother of Judas, was ordained Prince and High Priest in 143. The period covered by the reign of Simon and his successors, from 143 B.C. to 63 B.C., is properly the Asmonean (or Hasmonean) period, the name meaning "Simonites." During the latter part of the Asmonean period the borders of the kingdom of the Jews were extended to practically the same limits of the kingdom of David, so well did the Jews prosper politically. But inner strife and political jealousies brought on civil war, and in 63 B.C. Jewish independence was lost, Palestine passing under the yoke of Rome. With the exception of three years, from 40 to 37 B.C., during which time the king of Parthia held the country under domination, the Romans did not cease to dominate Palestine from 63 B.C. to the close of the New Testament period.

THEIR RELIGIOUS STATUS

Religiously, the Jews can best be understood by studying the parties which had arisen, and into which they were broken up.

The Pharisees. This party was so named from the Greek *Pharisaios*, meaning a separatist. They were the predominant party, which arose in the

90 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

post-exilic period. They were the successors of the Chasidim, the ancient party which struggled against the Hellenising influences with which the Jews were confronted in the Graeco-Roman world. They were the conservatives or orthodox, who held the letter of the law in almost superstitious regard, and had built up a detailed interpretation of the law which they gradually came to reverence as they revered the law itself. They believed in the existence of angels, spirits, in a future life, the freedom of the will and in a coming Messiah. They were rigidly patriotic to their own nation, and their arrogancy is charged as the cause for the tottering Jewish state when the Roman yoke was placed upon the neck of the Jews. In the time of Christ they numbered, according to Josephus, six thousand. There were two parties of them: the Hillel, the moderate party, and the Schammai, the "straitest sect." It was the last-mentioned to which Paul belonged. They were the outstanding religious party, aspiring to the control of civil and religious institutions. They composed the majority of the Sanhedrin. Among them were some pious persons, such as Nicodemus, Joseph of Aramathea and possibly Gamaliel.

The Sadducees. This party received its name from the Greek *Tsaddoukaïos* (Σαδδουκαῖος) transliterated either from the Hebrew *Zadok*, a high

priest in David's time, or *tsodik*, a Hebrew word meaning "righteous" or "upright." They opposed the Pharisees in almost every particular. They were liberals, the materialists, freethinkers, and had little regard for the law, rejecting the Pharisaic interpretations of the same. They also rejected the other doctrines of the Pharisees, such as angels, spirit, future life, etc. They were almost purely negative in their attitude towards religious matters. They were, in reality, a reactionary party, revolting from the ultra-conservatism of the Pharisaic position. Their number was comparatively small, but they were wealthy and influential. Their ambition was for political, rather than religious power.

The Essenes. The name is either from the Hebrew word *aw-say-yaw*, to heal, or the Greek word *hosios* (ὅσιος), holy. It was a sect which arose mediating between the Pharisees and Sadducees. They sought neither to stress nor to reject the traditional, giving themselves over to a mystical, contemplative mode of life. They formed a brotherhood of a moral and religious nature which became the forerunner of all subsequent orders of monks, hermits, friars and nuns. They took an oath, or at least a pledge of secrecy; were initiated into the order; practised celibacy, and were communistic. They appear to have had little interest in the dis-

92 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

turbances which arose over Jesus, remaining unmoved by all that was transpiring.

The Herodians. So named because of their support of Herod of Galilee, in his ambition and effort to be recognised as "King," by the Roman Emperor, Caligula. Being a purely political party, it figured only indirectly in the religious life of the Jews. It had little in common with the other parties, except in joining hands with the Pharisees and Sadducees, whose enemies they were, in seeking to incriminate Jesus.

PHARISAIC MESSIANISM

As is seen from a review of the political condition and religious status of the Jews at the time of the opening of the New Testament, their Messianism would be that which was held and taught by the Pharisees, for they shaped the thinking of the mass of the Jews, interpreting their Scriptures for them. They were the ruling element in the Sanhedrin; also the scribes, who played such an important part in New Testament times. They built up rigid and materialistic interpretations of the law, utterly ignoring and totally disregarding the spirit of it, placing it out of all relations with life. They bound burdens on men's backs which they would not touch with one of their fingers (Matt. 23:4). They were strict in paying tithes of herbs and spices, but neg-

lected the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy and faith (Matt. 23:23). They hated the Gentiles, as did all of the Jews. They accused Jesus of casting out devils by the prince of devils (Matt. 9:34). They watched Him with a jealous eye from the time that He entered His public ministry, and plotted frequently to take Him. It was they who hounded Him until they had Him on the cross. They assisted in His arrest, took an active part in His trial and pleasure in His condemnation. Jesus had frequently condemned them, calling them "hypocrites," "blind guides," etc., and had warned His disciples against them.

Touching the doctrine of the Messianic hope, it is not difficult to divine what sort of a Messianism would be held by such a sect as the Pharisees. Anything like a spiritual conception of the Messianic hope would not be countenanced by a dominating sect, in whose hands everything else had become legalistic, formal and materialistic. One would indeed be surprised if the spiritual benefits of the Messianic hope, which were spoken of by the prophets, had not been completely ignored and rendered meaningless by these legalistic, materialistic, self-righteous Pharisees. Instead of finding them advocates of a Messianism, well-balanced as to its spiritual and literal aspects as was announced by the prophets, they had exalted the literal and ma-

94 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

terialistic aspect to the complete exclusion of the spiritual.

Christ was, of necessity, a complete disappointment to Pharisaic Messianism. They expected that a mighty king would arise, who would immediately throw off the Roman yoke of oppression. They expected that he would make Jerusalem his capital, and subject all the surrounding nations to the Jews. There is no wonder that the Christ of Bethlehem could not meet such wrongly-directed expectations.

It might be just to observe at this point, that an extreme millennial view which refuses to acknowledge the present, spiritual kingdom of Christ in the world, and demands an extremely literal interpretation of all the kingdom teaching of the New Testament, is unconsciously a participation in the view of the literalistic Pharisees, and is quite as much in error as the denial of the future, visible kingdom. The acknowledgment of one aspect of kingdom teaching and denial of the other represents two extremes from which a correct Messianism would deliver. Not a spiritualising, nor a literalising, to the exclusion one of the other, but in proper relation to each other and in their proper order, is the correct view of the Messianism of the Bible.

CHAPTER VI

THE MESSIANISM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

One of the most unique characters of the Bible is John the Baptist. He may be reckoned, at the same time, as the last prophet of the Old Testament and the first of the New Testament. He stood with one foot in the Old Dispensation and the other in the New, thus spanning them. He was the "Messenger of the Covenant" prophesied by Malachi, the "Elijah" who was to come (Matt. :7-15).

The message of John the Baptist to the people was: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3:2). This message he continued to declare with fiery eloquence, and multitudes flocked to him for baptism. There are those who have difficulty in interpreting John's message and its effect upon the people. No doubt many who came for baptism were prompted by a materialistic conception of the Messianic hope. Even Pharisees and Sadducees were among the applicants. There is a tendency, at the present, to interpret John's ministry as based upon a materialistic conception

96 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

of the Messianic hope. Such would have us believe that John, himself, was operating upon a false idea, and that he believed the Jesus was coming to set up immediately an earthly kingdom.

Waiving for the present John's personal Messianic conception, let us examine his message.

JOHN'S MESSIANIC MESSAGE

John's message was not the heralding of an immediate and earthly kingdom. This statement may seem somewhat challenging at first, but can be substantiated. Its characterising utterance was: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand". Its key notes were "repentance" and "the kingdom". Please note that it was not only John who heralded this message; but Jesus, when he began His public ministry, caught up the same message, and went about saying: "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). Not only did John and Jesus preach in this manner; but when he called and commissioned His apostles He told them to tell the same message. Here is the commission: "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10:7). The seventy were also commanded to preach the kingdom and say: "The kingdom of God is come nigh" (Luke 10:11). Now, one thing is evident: either John's ministry had in it the spiritual conception and

The Messianism of John the Baptist 97

message of the Messianic hope, or else the ministry of Jesus, the twelve and the seventy was entirely misdirected. It would appear that every candid person would admit of the logical correctness of this conclusion, and that no one would dare venture a criticism of the ministries of Jesus, the twelve and the seventy. There are other things that are convincing that John's ministry was a spiritual one.

1. *His introduction of Jesus:* "On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith: Behold the lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). This statement is very suggestive of the redemptive work of Christ, recalling the Old Testament sacrificial lamb, and needs no further comment.

2. *His reference to the Holy Spirit's baptism:* "I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire" (Luke 3:16; Matt. 3:11). This carries us entirely across the earthly ministry of Jesus, beyond His crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, to Pentecost, where Jesus witnessed to His disciples that He had returned to the Father, by sending the Holy Spirit as He had promised to do. Here the spiritual blessings which accompany "repentance" and the Holy Spirit's baptism were preached by John.

98 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

3. *His rejection of certain candidates, who had evidently come out of selfish motives:* "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them, Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance" (Matt. 3:7-8). Here were some of the identical persons—the Pharisees who had such materialistic and unspiritual conceptions of the Messiah, coming to receive John's baptism. No doubt they misunderstood John's ministry, but, fearing lest they might be mistaken and thus fail to get in upon the ground floor of the kingdom, should one appear, were willing to submit to John's baptism, prompted purely by selfish motives. John, no doubt, had a good reason for calling them an "offspring of vipers". According to both Matthew and Luke, John rebuked them for priding themselves on the fact that they were of the seed of Abraham (Matt. 3:9 and Luke 3:8). They appear just about ready to present their credentials, as children of Abraham, for prominent places in the kingdom.

JOHN'S PERSONAL CONCEPTION OF THE MESSIAH

Now, a wrong understanding of John's ministry by the Pharisees and Sadducees does not necessarily argue against its spirituality and correctness, and proves nothing in this regard.

The Messianism of John the Baptist 99

From what we have seen in relation to John's Messianic message, it is difficult to believe that he could have been wrong in his personal conceptions of the work of the Messiah. Even if it be true, that the twelve apostles were wrong in relation to their thinking concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom, the case of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, seems somewhat different.

The question of John's personal conception of the Messiah arises more particularly in connection with one incident. It was when John was in prison, being told that Jesus was performing miracles, and even raising the dead, that he sent two of His disciples to Jesus, telling them to ask Him the following question: "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" (Luke 7:20). Why this question? There are several answers which are given. Among them are the following:

That John had a wrong conception of the Messiahship of Jesus, and that, being in prison, John was impatiently awaiting the time when Jesus would set up his kingdom, as a result of which he would be released.

That John sent his disciples to ask Jesus this question, that they might have for themselves an answer from the lips of Jesus, Himself, in order that they might be strengthened in their own faith in His Messiahship.

100 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

That some doubt had arisen in the mind of John, and that he desired an assuring message from Christ at that time.

An examination of the answer which Jesus sent to John may throw some light upon the whole matter.

A part of the answer of Jesus to John was an exhibition of His power. After the question was asked, in the same hour, He healed infirmities and plagues, cast out evil spirits, and caused the blind to see. Then said Jesus unto John's disciples: "Go and tell John the things which ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them". He also added: "Blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me" (Luke 7:22 and 23).

It should be noted, that Jesus not only gave an exhibition of His power as an answer to John, but that the exercise of that power was within the realm of spiritual, as well as material things. It was the preaching of good tidings, as well as the healing of the body. His answer had no political outlook, whatsoever, but a decidedly spiritual bearing. John appears to have understood it, and publicans continued to submit to his baptism at the hands of his disciples (Luke 7:29). This is significant when

The Messianism of John the Baptist 101

we remember, that the first distinct note of his preaching and a condition for baptism was, repentance.

Now, John may have sent one of His disciples, that they might receive an answer from Christ, Himself, relative to His Messiahship, for their personal benefit and the benefit of all of John's disciples. It may be that there were times when John, in his own thinking, became confused over the kingdom aspect of the message which he had proclaimed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. If so, it was a confusion of the mind, and not of the message, and would not be strange in relation to prophetic utterances, for prophets appear often to have spoken better than they knew. We should not forget, that John was human, and subject to temptation, as well as others. He had exchanged the pure, free air of the Jordan for the foul air of the dungeon, and, in such circumstances and environments, it would be surprising if he should not have been tempted to doubt almost anything which he had believed and hoped concerning the Messiah, and had not need of a fresh testimony of assurance to his own heart from the lips of Christ.

Whatever may be said concerning the Baptist's personal Messianic conception, or any possible doubts which may have arisen in his mind later when he was under great trial, there is absolutely no reason

102 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

why his Messianic message should be looked upon as a mistaken heralding of an immediate and temporal kingdom. It was the inspired heralding of just what was being ushered in.

CHAPTER VII

CONTENT OF THE MESSIANIC SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

A number of questions arise concerning the Messianic self-consciousness of Jesus. Did Jesus know that He was the Messiah? If so, when did He come into possession of this consciousness? Did He claim to be a king? If so of what sort of a kingdom was He king? If a king, or the Messiah, how could He harmonise His predicted sufferings and death with His kingdom? These may appear difficult questions to us, but they were not to Him.

On this point there is no small amount of confusion. Some have gone so far as to teach, that Christ Himself was not clear upon the subject of His Messiahship, and necessarily felt His way amidst the circumstances of His day. Not only the critic, but a few who should have a clearer conception of Christ's Messianic programme teach, that up to a certain point in His ministry He laboured toward the establishment of an immediate Jewish kingdom, and that when He saw the Jews would not accept Him, a change was made in His programme, and He decided to organise a church instead. The repudi-

104 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

ation of such an unjustified interpretation of the Messianic programme is not hard to find, for it is entirely contrary to the Gospel narrative. At least twice, steps were taken by the Jews to make Jesus king, once even by force (John 6:15), but He withdrew Himself. Christ was not a king who was refused the crown of the Jews, but the King refusing their crown. Should He have accepted the crown of the Jews, where would be our Redeemer? The world would have had a Jewish kingdom, but no Saviour—no redemption.

While it would be folly to dogmatise as to the time when Jesus came into full consciousness of the Messianic program, one need have no hesitancy in believing that Jesus never groped blindly amidst circumstances, that He never experimented in one manner, then another. It may be declared unhesitatingly and with emphasis, that Jesus did not proceed for a time upon the assumption of setting up an earthly kingdom, later switching His plan to the establishing of the church, because of being rejected by the Jews. Even at the age of twelve Jesus gave evidence of a consciousness of a unique relation to the Father (Luke 2:49), and who dare question His consciousness of the Messianic programme after He entered upon His public ministry? Had Jesus no better conception of the Messianic programme than some would teach, the introduction

Content of Messianic Self-Consciousness 105

which John the Baptist gave to Him when He entered upon His ministry must have sounded strange in His ears. But Jesus knew well the Messianic programme, as His teachings to His disciples disclose.

Concerning the Messianic self-consciousness of Jesus—Geerhardus Vos says: "He distinguished two forms of Messianic activity, one on earth in humility, one from the throne of glory, and, corresponding to this two forms of the kingdom, one invisible now, one visible at the end, and, thus understood, the two-sidedness of His Messianic consciousness affords a striking parallel to the two-sidedness of His kingdom conception."¹

His kingdom was not of the world (John 18:36). He was called a "born king" by the wise men from the east (Matt. 2:2). When Pilate asked Him whether He was a king He answered: "Thou sayest" (Matt. 27:11), which was an answer in the affirmative. When over the cross there was written: "This is Jesus the King of the Jews", there was, in reality, no misrepresentation; though Pilate's motive in thus placarding the cross was not in the interest of truth so much as for self protection and vindication. Pilate also took this opportunity for revenge against the troublesome Jews, and sought to humiliate them

¹ "The Kingdom of God and the Church," p. 61.

106 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

by intimating to the world that a crucified criminal was their king.

THE "KINGDOM OF HEAVEN" AND "KINGDOM OF GOD"

An effort is sometimes made to differentiate between the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of heaven", but this brings confusion and is unnecessary. That the phrases are used interchangeably by Jesus can be easily proven by a little observation.

Matthew says concerning the preaching of Jesus: "From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the *kingdom of heaven* is at hand."

—*Matt.* 4: 17.

Mark reports that He said: "The *kingdom of God* is at hand."

—*Mark* 1: 15.

Matthew reports Jesus to have said concerning the necessity of the new birth: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the *kingdom of heaven*."

—*Matt.* 18: 3.

Mark says: "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the *kingdom of God* as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein."

—*Mark* 10: 15.

Luke says: "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the *kingdom of God* as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein."

—*Luke* 18: 17.

Matthew says, that the parables were uttered concerning the "*kingdom of heaven*."

—*Matt.* 13: 11, 24, 31, 33.

Content of Messianic Self-Consciousness 107

Mark calls them parables of the "*kingdom of God*."

—*Mark* 4: 11, 26, 30.

Luke also calls the same parables "*kingdom of God*" parables.

—*Luke* 13: 18, 20.

There are many such passages where Jesus is quoted in such a way as to show that the writers understood Him to have meant the same thing when He used one phrase or the other; but these are typical and are sufficient to establish the point, that the expressions, "*kingdom of heaven*", and "*kingdom of God*", are used interchangeably in the New Testament.

There may be a sense in which the two terms "*Kingdom of Heaven*", and "*Kingdom of God*", have a differing connotation. The latter might refer to God's eternal and universal rule, while the former might designate that rule as it is established upon earth. The phrase, "*Kingdom of Heaven*", would then indicate the character and source of the kingdom, but would be, in reality, a form and phase of the "*Kingdom of God*".

While Jesus employed both phrases to express the same thing, Matthew uses "*Kingdom of Heaven*" almost exclusively, while Mark and Luke employ the phrase, "*Kingdom of God*". Dr. Vos suggests for these facts the following reason: First, among the later Jews a tendency existed to forego employ-

108 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

ing the name of God; and that the word "heaven" was used as a substitute. Similar uses of the word "heaven" are found in Matt. 16:19; Mark 11:30; Luke 15:18, 21. This may account for the almost exclusive use of the phrase, "Kingdom of Heaven", in Matthew. Again, for the same reason, Mark and Luke may employ the phrase, "Kingdom of God", exclusively, considering the phrase, "Kingdom of Heaven", typically Jewish, and less intelligible to Gentile readers.²

THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH

No reference has yet been made to the group of Christ's followers denominated the "church". There is a sense in which the present spiritual kingdom and the church are identical. The condition of entering, and even seeing the kingdom, is the same as that required for admission into the true church, viz. regeneration (John 3:3-5; Matt. 18:3). The word *ecclesia* (Greek *ἐκκλησία*), from which we translate the word church, is compounded of *ek* (*ἐκ*), a preposition, meaning out of, and *kaleo* (*καλέω*), meaning to call. The word means, the called-out. The Septuagint uses this word in a few instances to designate the assembly of Israel; but the New Testament writers made frequent use of the word.

² "The Kingdom of God and the Church," pp. 31-33.

Content of Messianic Self-Consciousness 109

The close relationship of the church and the kingdom is evidenced by the fact, that Peter was to sustain a very unique relation to both. He was to have a place in the foundation of the church, and to be entrusted with the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16:18, 19).

It has been suggested, that the kingdom idea conveys the relation of the believer to God, as ruler, and to His law by which he is governed; while the church relationship indicates the separation of believers from the world and their relation to one another. In the light of the persistency of the kingdom teaching to the church in its founding, and in the church after its establishment, some such distinction appears consistent.

There is a sense, however, in which the kingdom has a wider scope. The church of Christ embraces only such persons as are born from above, and thus become members of the body of Christ. The kingdom may be said to embrace the whole scope of human affairs, world-wide, wherever God has shown His supremacy. Harmonising these two ideas, whether it always does so intelligently or not, the church goes forward in the double consciousness, first of its separation from the world, and secondly, in its complete dependence upon and subordination to heaven, from which it looks for its Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:20).

110 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

The Gospels and the Epistles give us this conception of the relation of the church and the kingdom. The body of Christ, which is united to Him by faith, is to rule with Him in the perfected kingdom. In the closing chapters of the Revelation the "Holy City" is definitely designated as the church, the bride of Christ, and is distinct from the great world and the great nations of the world which will finally rejoice in the light of that city.

That there were two aspects to the work of the Messiah, a literal and a spiritual one, has been unmistakably reflected in Old Testament prophecy. The order of these two aspects of the kingdom is set forth in Christ's own teachings as follows: To the Pharisees, who pressed upon Him the question, when the kingdom of God should come, He replied that it was already in their midst. They could not see it, for they were not in a position to discern spiritual realities. It was not a matter for observation. Turning to His disciples, He told them that after His departure there would be those who would come and profess to be Christ's, and warned them against going after them, assuring them that, when He, the Son of Man, came, "in His day", He would be manifest as the lightning in the heavens. Here we have the invisible and the visible aspects of the kingdom set in contrast by Christ, Himself. One aspect was not of "observa-

Content of Messianic Self-Consciousness 111

tion": the other manifest as the lightning of heaven. But teaching them further He said: "But first must He suffer many things and be rejected of this generation" (Luke 17:25). That is, before He can be revealed in "His day", the day of His glory, He must suffer many things. He is saying to His apostles, that there is an item in the Messianic programme which precedes that of His glory: It is the item of His suffering.

Christ was the "born king": He is king, in a genuinely spiritual sense, to all who accept Him as such, who give to Him the throne of their lives, who put the crown upon His head and put the sceptre into His hand. To such He is as much King as He will be a million of years from now. He died as a king, according to His own testimony (Matt. 27:11), and He is coming as King (Matt. 25:23-28). He *was* king: He *is* King now, and *will* be until His work is completed and He shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father (I Cor. 15:23-28). Because of our human limitations, it is difficult for us to see more than one item in the great redemptive programme at a time; but we should be willing to let Christ's own testimony, in relation to the kingdom aspect of His first coming and His teaching concerning the future, to stand unchallenged. There is certainly no higher authority.

112 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

That there was no break in the Messianic programme of Jesus, relative to His Kingly relation, is evidenced by the persistency with which the kingdom continued to be taught, both by Himself and the apostles.

The "Kingdom of God" was the subject of Christ's teachings to His apostles, during the forty days of His post resurrection stay (*Acts* 1:3).

The Apostle Paul preached the "Kingdom of God" on his missionary journey (*Acts* 14:22), and at Rome (*Acts* 28:23).

The definition of the present "Kingdom of God," as given by the Apostle, reveals it to be a spiritual reality, for he says: "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (*Romans* 14:17).

Saints are said to be "delivered out of the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love" (*Col.* 1:13).

In the first chapter of Revelation is found a doxology which embraces a wonderful retrospective achievement of the work of Christ, and according to the exact Greek rendering reads: "To the one having loved us and freed us from our sins through his blood, and *made us a kingdom*, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion into the eternities". Here the Aorist tense is used, suggesting not only past time, but a single act, once and for all. This harmonises beautifully with the other Scripture teaching relating to the present, spiritual kingdom of Christ, which the saints constitute.

CHRIST'S OWN RECOGNISED MESSIANIC PROGRAMME

An epitome of Christ's teaching concerning His recognised Messianic programme and His relation to it may be given as follows:

1. He made a complete break with the Pharisaic system.

2. He gave a new teaching about God, disclosing Him to be Father, not merely a king or judge.

3. His kingdom, whatever and whenever, was Davidic (Luke 1:31-33).

4. Though fundamentally Davidic, He exalted it above the Davidic (Mark 12:35-37).

5. He repudiated the idea of a Jewish monopoly upon the kingdom.

6. He taught the necessity of the death of the Messiah.

7. He predicted His resurrection.

8. He taught, that in order to complete His Messianic programme, He must return to the Father, during which time the Holy Spirit would be engaged with the practical carrying out of what He potentially accomplished in His mediatorial work, after which He would return in power to set up His visible, glorious kingdom.

It should yet be stated, that while Jesus emphasised these truths, none of them were entirely new. In one manner or another, by prophecy 'or

114 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

symbol, they can be found in the Messianic content of the Old Testament. He clarified these teachings, and exemplified them by being their fulfilment.

Touching the Messianic self-consciousness of Jesus, there is an aspect of His Lordship which should yet be noticed:

During His earthly ministry He proved His Lordship over 'everything'. His lordship over the world of spirits was proven by the casting out of demons. He proved His lordship over physical man by healing afflicted bodies, and over spiritual man by forgiving sins. The calming of the troubled sea at His word is an evidence that even the elements recognised the authority of their Master. His supremacy in the realm of nature was seen when, at the wedding feast in Cana, "the conscious water saw its Lord, and blushed", becoming wine; also when the fig tree withered away at His displeasure. There is even a hint at His authority over the beast, where we have the significant little verse which says: "And (He) was with the wild beasts" (Mark 1:13), suggesting a measure of companionship with His animal creatures.

The Messianic self-consciousness of Jesus is illustrated more completely in Chapter IX entitled: "The Apostles in the School of Transition".

CHAPTER VIII

THE COLLAPSE OF THE MESSIANIC HOPE

That the apostles of Jesus shared, in some real measure, the Messianism of the Pharisees who expected the establishment of an immediate earthly kingdom, no thoughtful student of the New Testament will deny. But there was this difference: The Pharisees had already rejected Him because they could see no possibility in Him of meeting their materialistic expectations, while the apostles believed what they could not see, that, in a way as yet unknown to them, He would prove Himself able to accomplish what seemed to them to be, at least in part, His mission, that of setting up the kingdom. But there was another difference. The apostles of Jesus had a heart experience, because of which they knew something which defied analysis by any intellectual process. As a result of this spiritual quickening, they had at least a glimpse into the spirituality of Christ's kingdom; yet this vision was still hampered by materialistic conceptions.

Who can know the bosom struggles of the earliest disciples of Jesus, as they conceived, in a measure,

116 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

the spirituality of His mission, and yet were not able to relate this aspect of His work to that of the "King of Israel"? No doubt a constant struggle was theirs from the day that Nathanael, one of the first five disciples called, responded: "Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49).

We are not wanting evidence that the apostles were still greatly in the dark concerning the spiritual mission of Jesus late in the third year of His ministry. Just before the transfiguration we are told that Jesus began to teach that the Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected of the elders, chief priests and scribes; must be killed and after three days rise again. At this, Peter, the spokesman, took Him and began to reprimand Him. But Jesus rebuked Peter, saying: "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of man" (Mark 8:33). A good paraphrase of this verse might be suggested as follows: "Peter, the course which you are now pursuing is due to a lack of spiritual discernment. By the delusion of material things which is the work of Satan, you are being blinded to the spirituality of my mission. It is man's shortsightedness pitted against God's wisdom. Put such false delusions behind thee".

The fact that the apostles continued to be disturbed by the teachings of the scribes on one hand,

and the statements of Jesus' on the other, is reflected from the transfiguration narrative. When Jesus came down from the Mount, having been transfigured before a part of their company, Jesus said to them: "Tell the vision to no man until the Son of Man be risen from the dead" (Matt. 17:9). Mark adds, that they questioned among themselves what the rising from the dead should mean (Mark 9:10). Immediately they propounded a question to Jesus: "How is it that the scribes say that Elijah must first come," referring to Malachi's prophecy, which meant John the Baptist, and which fulfilment the scribes were denying, thus attempting to invalidate the Messianic claims of Jesus. Just as the scribes had misunderstood John's ministry to be a material rather than a spiritual ministry, so they persisted in the kingdom of Jesus being a material rather than a spiritual one. Jesus immediately told them that as John had suffered at the hands of the scribes, the Son of Man would also suffer at their hands.

Despite all the hope which the apostles of Jesus may have entertained concerning the physical well-being of their Master and the kingdom which it seemed to them that He must certainly set up, they became more and more distressed as, toward the close of His life, He informed them more frequently and in language which ought not have been mis-

118 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

understood, that He must suffer and die. It was while yet in Galilee that Jesus told them that he should be killed, and that He would rise again the third day (Matt. 17:22). The writer then adds: "And they were exceeding sorry".

The collapse of their Messianic hope came when Jesus was betrayed, tried and actually crucified upon Calvary. All of the apostles had forsaken Him before his trial was over, except John, and, of the twelve, he alone stood at the cross. Matthew tells us that when Jesus was betrayed in the Garden, all of the disciples forsook Him and fled (26:56). Peter and John, having recovered themselves, followed unto the high priest's palace. Reluctantly Peter went in, and sat down with the servants "to see the end." But Peter failed and did not remain with Jesus to the end, as did John, but denied Him thrice with heartrending curses.

James Stalker was quite correct when he wrote: "There never was an enterprise in the world which seemed more completely at an end than did that of Jesus on the last Old Testament Sabbath. Christianity died with Christ, and was laid with Him in the sepulchre. It is true that when, looking back at this distance, we see the stone rolled to the mouth of the tomb, we experience little emotion; for we are in the secret of Providence and know what is going to happen. But, when He was buried, there

The Collapse of the Messianic Hope 119

was not a single human being that believed He would ever rise again before the day of the world's doom." ¹

The bitter disappointment of the apostles can best be estimated if we may have them relate it in their own words, while their hearts were broken under the crushing of their most cherished hope. It was the day after the Jewish Sabbath. Two of the disciples were on their way to Emmaus, the exact location of which is somewhat in dispute. The name of the one is given as Cleopas and the other one is not named. Just who it was whom Luke calls Cleopas is not certain. It is quite probable that Emmaus was the home of one or even both of them, and that they were returning home as one would whose life plan has been suddenly crushed and the future was but a dark foreboding. They were walking along, talking of the events of the yesterdays, which seemed to them like a horrifying nightmare. Quite unexpectedly they were joined by a third person, whose identity was unknown to them, and who may have been for a brief time an unwelcome travelling companion. But their hearts were too full to remain silent, and any other subject would have been too commonplace in the light of the tragic events which had just transpired. It seemed like a breach of courtesy when the unbidden and strange companion

¹ "Life of Christ," p. 140.

120 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

broke in upon the conversation with the question: "What communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk?" Startled both by question and the apparent stupidity of the questioner, Cleopas answered: "Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem, and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days?" Mere generalities would not suffice, and as if determined to secure a specific statement from these apostles from whom hope had apparently taken wings, the questioner continued to ask: "What things?" Unable to evade a straight-forward answer, they replied: "Concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him? But we hoped that it was he who should have redeemed Israel." Luke 24:18-19.

In the last line of this confession is to be found the collapse of the Messianic hope, as they were able to think of it. The redemption of Israel was not only that spiritual work which we are likely to read into the language from our vantage point of nearly two thousand years of accumulated knowledge of the historic Christ; but a striking off of the yoke of foreign domination which Israel had worn most of the time for a period of more than seven hundred years, and an avenging of the wrongs which she

The Collapse of the Messianic Hope 121

had suffered. This, together with a reign of righteousness, justice and peace, with Christ upon the throne of His father David, with Jerusalem as His capital, and the surrounding nations rendering homage to Israel, was the Messianic hope which lay at the feet of the apostles crushed, as it appeared, forever, as they stood dazed for a brief time and then scattered every man to his own home (John 16:32). "We had hoped, but!"

CHAPTER IX

THE APOSTLES IN THE SCHOOL OF TRANSITION

The apostles of Jesus were, nationally, Jews. When He found them they were very much like the common rank and file of the Jews of their day, and shared their thinking, which was largely guided by the Pharisees, through their teachers or interpreters, the scribes. The essential difference between the followers of Jesus and the Pharisees was, that they accepted Christ as the Messiah, whatever that might mean, while the Pharisees rejected Him as the Messiah; for the lowly circumstances of His birth, the absence of political ambition on His part and the spiritual nature of His ministry convinced them that He would not meet their Messianic expectations.

There were three distinct calls which Jesus gave to some of those who became His apostles. One call took place at the Jordan where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist (John 1), and is sometimes spoken of as a call to *friendship*. A second call occurred when Jesus found a number of them back at their occupation as fishermen in Galilee, and

The Apostles in the School of Transition 123

said unto them: "Come after me and I will make you (cause you to become) fishers of men." Matt. 4:18. This is quite properly a call to *discipleship*, for a disciple is a learner, and Jesus purposed to instruct them in the art of fishing for men, and as Luke puts it, "to cause them to catch men alive" (Greek) 5:10. The third call was when, in the second year of His ministry, Jesus, having spent a whole night on the mountain in prayer, came down to His disciples and selected twelve as apostles (Luke 6:12-16). This was a call to *apostleship*. Mark states the purpose of the apostolic call to be: "That they might be with him (discipleship, which means being instructed, was not to be discontinued), and that he might send them forth to preach (the word apostle being compounded of the Greek verb *to send*, and a preposition, meaning, *away*), and to have authority to cast out demons." 3:13-15.

The whole group of Christ's disciples constituted the church in embryo, and the apostles were to be ministers and leaders. That a spiritual quickening or regeneration, because of which they became children of God and their names were written in heaven, marvellous as that was, did not set them intellectually right is evident from the things they said to Jesus, and Jesus said to them. Doctrinally, they were the heirs of several centuries of materialistic teaching concerning the Messiah, and with this Jesus

124 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

immediately began to reckon, and set about to correct. The process was a long and somewhat tedious one, but Christ knew how to accomplish their transition from wrong conceptions of Him and His work to right ones. He was a patient, tactful, successful Teacher, who enrolled the apostles in His school, as we shall see. Standing where we stand it would seem to us, at first, that one explanation from the lips of Jesus should have made everything clear to the apostles; but we must not forget that we are heirs of more than nineteen centuries of increasing light, and even today there are not a few who are just about as much confused over the spiritual and literal aspects of the Kingdom of God, as were these apostles. The main difference is, today some of the unenlightened disciples of Jesus are emphasizing the spiritual aspect to the exclusion of the literal, while the apostles mistakingly emphasized the literal at the expense of the spiritual. A characteristic of the race then—that of being able to see only one thing at a time—is still in evidence. Happy that soul who can properly relate great truths, such as these are, together!

We shall now attempt to discover the processes by which Jesus set about to correct the wrong thinking, and consequently the wrong attitude of His disciples toward His kingdom, and how it was ultimately accomplished.

THE COURSE OF INSTRUCTION

The Lesson of Repentance. There were two distinct notes in the ministry of Jesus: one was that of the *kingdom* and the other *repentance*. Repentance is an attitude which relates to man's well-being in the sight of God. It can be clearly seen as a spiritual note. Instead of relating the "kingdom" to patriotism, to politics or statesmanship, he related it to repentance—a humble, penitent attitude of soul. It was not a question of favour or disfavour with the Emperor of Rome, under whose domination Palestine was in the time of Christ, but a matter of favour or disfavour with God. As Jesus went about all Galilee preaching, His disciples accompanied Him. The omission of any mention of citizenship, civil rights or Roman oppression on the part of Jesus, may have seemed strange to these new disciples; but "kingdom, repentance"—not "kingdom, political liberty", were the only notes of His ministry. (Matt. 4:17, 22-23).

The Lesson of the True Beatitudes. A practical, if not a formal code of false "Beatitudes" was in vogue at the time of Christ and has been ever since. This false code has dealt with man's supposed well-being in relation to a strong, well-developed, dominating political system. The Beatitudes of

126 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

Jesus are concerned with man's well-being in relation to the spiritual kingdom of God upon earth.

CHRIST'S BEATITUDES	THE WORLD'S BEATITUDES
Blessed are the poor in spirit.	Blessed are the strong in spirit.
Blessed are they that mourn.	Blessed are they that laugh.
Blessed are the meek.	Blessed are they who assert their rights.
Blessed are the hungry.	Blessed are they who are full.
Blessed are the merciful.	Blessed is he who has revenge.
Blessed are the pure in heart.	Blessed is he, whose heart is steel.
Blessed are the peacemakers.	Blessed are the successful war-makers.
Blessed are the persecuted.	Blessed are the persecutors.
Blessed are the reviled.	Blessed are those who can revile.

In the Beatitudes of Christ spiritual things are reckoned as the attained blessings, while in the Beatitudes of the world material things are looked upon as the measure of the good. All this may sound familiar and commonplace in our teaching now, but to the disciples it was a much less familiar thing.

The Lesson of True Riches. In the days of Christ, as well as every day since, a man's material possessions determined his wealth. This again was

The Apostles in the School of Transition 127

based upon a materialistic view of life. Jesus only once called an individual a "fool", or "foolish one", and it was a prosperous man who measured soul interests by material prosperity. "Soul take thine ease, thou has much goods," soliloquised the successful but deluded farmer. But Jesus said: "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee" (Luke 12:20). Jesus counselled His disciples not to lay up for themselves treasures on earth, for here riches are corrupted or are stolen; but to lay up treasures in heaven where they are safe and sure (Matt. 6:19-20). Someone has said that all one can take with him in his cold, pale hand is what he has given away. Jesus taught that the safest and most profitable investment for His disciples was of a spiritual nature, which would be a treasure awaiting them in heaven. Since a well-filled treasury is looked upon as an indispensable asset to any earthly government, to say the least, Christ, in directing the disciples toward a spiritual investment, was turning their eyes away from any vision which they might have had of an earthly kingdom.

The Lesson of Kingdom Importance. Humanly speaking, there are a few things which concern us directly. Food, clothing and shelter constitute a trinity of material things which are uppermost in men's minds. Again, a plentiful supply of food, sufficient clothing and adequate shelter are almost

128 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

inseparably bound up with the political and commercial prosperity of a nation. When Jesus drew the line between work and worry, and cited the lilies of the field and the birds of the air as care-free objects of the Father's interest, He was directing the minds of His disciples away from the material things which were necessary in themselves, toward spiritual things. Reaching the climax, Jesus said: "But seek ye his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things (necessary material things) shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). Material things are secondary and should be treated as such. The kingdom of God and righteousness, invisible as that kingdom was, were to be the objects of pursuit by the followers of Jesus. Fine lesson for disciples in the "School of Transition"!

The Lesson of a Present Kingdom, though Invisible. It was well towards the close of the ministry of Jesus that a company of Pharisees, possibly in the presence of His disciples, insisted upon a statement from Jesus, as to the time of the coming of the kingdom of God. To this Jesus responded: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for Lo, the kingdom of God is within you (or better as the margin of the American Standard Version has it, "in the midst of you") Luke 17:20-21. The kingdom of God, as it related to their day,

was not a material one, was not one which could be appreciated with the sense of sight, but was a spiritual reality in the hearts of His true followers; in their midst, although unrecognised by them.

The Lesson of His Rejection and His Revelation.
But this occasion must not pass without some specific instruction to the disciples of Jesus, who must have been not a little confused over His answer to the question propounded by the Pharisees. Recognising the confusion of mind, Jesus said to His disciples: "The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, Lo there! Lo here! go not away, nor follow after them: for as the lightning, when it lighteneth out of one part under the heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall the Son of man be in his day. But first (referring to the above as following the first) must He suffer many things and be rejected of this generation. * * * After the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:22-30). Here is mentioned a suffering and a being "revealed", chronologically, in order, "first" and second. A good paraphrase of the above teaching of Jesus might be as follows: "When I am departed from you, ye shall desire to see me, but I shall be absent. In your fond anticipation of my return ye shall be tempted to at least

130 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

examine the credentials of certain ones who shall claim falsely to be the Christ. (No less than sixty persons have professed to be the Messiah.) Go not after them. I will return, but when I do so it will not be in obscurity, but as the lightning which shineth throughout the heavens. Before this comes to pass, however, between now and then, lies a period of suffering, rejection and death, and an apostasy of the human family akin to that of Noah's day." Here in perspective is the Messianic programme, with its necessary suffering, its cross, and with its coming glory so conspicuous that the whole world will recognise its presence and reality. Here is Jesus' specific teaching on the subject of His humiliation and glorification.

The Lesson of Suffering and Reigning, in Parable. There are two parables which Jesus gave the people (His disciples and others), which have a direct bearing upon the subject under consideration, the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (Matt. 21:33-34), and the Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19:12-27). It should not be forgotten, that a parable is intended to teach one important truth and must not be pressed into too great detail, for by so doing every parable which Jesus gave or figurative language which He employed could be completely spoiled. So, then, a Kingdom Parable is intended to teach some particular aspect of the Kingdom of God.

The Apostles in the School of Transition 131

These parables are too familiar to require quoting in entirety, but note the teaching of the first one: A "householder"—God; a "vineyard"—the world; "husbandmen"—Jews. He sent "servants" and more "servants"—prophets whom they "beat", "stoned" and "killed". Finally He sent His "Son"—Christ, whom they "slew". "Other husbandmen"—Gentiles. Here in parable is a lesson on Christ's suffering. Note the second: A "nobleman"—Christ, went into "a far country"—back to heaven, to receive His kingdom credentials. He distributed to His "ten servants"—His church—"ten pounds"—bodily, mental and spiritual powers, to occupy until His return. At His return there was a reckoning when two were found who had made use of the talent, while one had refused stewardship for His Master. These represent classes. The nobleman returns, clothed with new authority for judgment. Here is a parable of Christ's authority for judgment, when He returns a second time.

Particular note should be made of the fact that Jesus had a definite purpose in speaking these parables. In relation to the first parable, the purpose is distinctly stated: "Because they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear" (Luke 19:11). Unless a careful distinction is made between His spiritual kingdom—an invisible kingdom within the hearts of His people,—and a visible,

132 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

glorious kingdom which is yet in the future, there will be much confusion, for Jesus declares the first to have been present in the days of His earthly ministry, while He declared that the latter was yet to come.

The Lesson of Suffering and Glory Shared. It was near the close of Christ's ministry when Peter, who had noticed the probability of Christ establishing an immediate, earthly kingdom gradually receding, as if almost in despair, approached Jesus with the question: "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have?" (Matt. 19:27). Here is an expression of keen disappointment, a confession of blighted prospects. All has been given up, sorrow has been shared, with no visible prospects of compensation. Jesus did not seek to minimise the sacrifice which they had made, but sought to show them that, while the compensation was yet in the future, it was adequate, and said: "Ye who have followed me, in the regeneration (in the time of my future glory when the world will have been reborn in righteousness) when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:23). Did His apostles comprehend this entirely? No! Neither do we fully understand it; but it is evident that Christ was contrasting His future glory with His then present humiliation

The Apostles in the School of Transition 133

and suffering, and made it plain that His true followers would share in both.

The Lesson from Jew and Gentile Nations. In connection with His prediction of the fall of Jerusalem and His instructions for the Christian's conduct at that time, which He delivered on the Mount of Olives, Jesus proceeded to a prophecy which did not have its fulfilment in the destruction of Jerusalem, but which can only be completely fulfilled in connection with a re-appearing of our Lord. This prediction can be properly interpreted only by the use of the hermeneutical principle called the law of "double reference", for it certainly refers to two times and events. The first and initial reference is to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was accomplished by Titus in A.D. 70. The second and more complete reference is to Christ's second coming. A part of the prophecy is as follows:

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift

134 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh." *Luke 21: 24-28*. (*Matt. 24* should also be examined.)

Several distinct things are to intervene the fall of Jerusalem and the return of Christ, as follows:

1. The Jews are to be scattered among the nations (Verse 24).
2. Jerusalem is to be trodden down of the Gentiles (Verse 24).
3. There is to be an end to the Gentile domination. The line also gives an intimation that the Jews will again come into their own land when Gentile rule ceases (Verse 24).
4. There will appear signs in the heavens (Verse 25).
5. Perplexity and distress of nations are to follow (Verse 25).
6. Christ will then come in power and great glory (Verse 27).

Here is a marvelously interesting outline of events when studied in relation to the rest of the Scriptures in the light of subsequent history. It is the lesson of the relation of the Gentile period to the still larger unfolding Messianic hope, and the more complete working out of the Messianic programme.

One more teaching will be examined, as the final lesson in the "School of Transition".

The Lesson of a Spiritual Faith. It was in the

The Apostles in the School of Transition 135

upper room where Jesus had eaten the last Passover meal, had ministered the sacrament and had washed His disciples' feet, that He gathered them closely to Him, in the absence of Judas Iscariot, and gave them His parting instructions, and offered for them His wonderful intercessory prayer. An analysis of these heart-talks reveals a final and closing word on various subjects, including prayer, obedience, love, the spiritual relationship, the Holy Spirit, His return, and faith. In the reading of these chapters the last-named subject is most likely to escape our attention; yet Jesus places it well toward the head of the list.

Note the statement: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me" (King James Version) (John 14:1). How startling! Had they not believed in Him? Of course they had; but their faith was in Him as they saw Him. It was a faith which had, as a basis, His physical presence. But Jesus well knew that their faith was about to be submitted to a strain, a test, to which it had never been exposed before, and it needed a new vitalization. What better could Jesus say to them than what He did say, which in substance was this? "Ye believe in God, and have never seen Him. Ye have believed in Me as I walked among you in bodily presence. The time is at hand when ye shall not see me, and now, make the new stretch of your faith: just as ye believe in the

136 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

Father whom ye have not seen, so believe in Me when ye shall not be able to see Me. I will come again; but until I return, let not your hearts be troubled, but believe in Me."

Jesus also taught them that the Holy Spirit, in His spiritual presence, would be in the world during the interim of His absence, reproofing the world of its sin, guiding His people into all truth, showing things to come, or constantly directing the eyes of His disciples to His promised return.

As we see it now, how befitting a closing lesson in the "Course of Instruction", in the School of Transition," where disciples were being trained away from a materialistic conception of Christ's Messiahship, to a spiritual one! Perhaps it would be more correct to say, that the disciples were being taught the proper relationship between the spiritual and the material, between the seen and the unseen, for every lesson in the course was designed to attract the minds of His followers away from the material, to which they had such a decided leaning, and to direct them to spiritual things in their proper relation to the material.

CHAPTER X

THE APOSTLES STILL IN THE SCHOOL OF TRANSITION

THE COURSE OF DEMONSTRATION

Easy as the lessons concerning the importance of spiritual things compared to material things, which Jesus taught His followers from time to time, may seem to present-day disciples, they were not easy to them. No careful student of the New Testament will dispute the fact, that when Jesus was crucified His apostles looked upon their Messianic hope as a disappointment. Their return to their own homes and a resuming of their former occupations is fair evidence of this. The teachings of Jesus by word had not accomplished the transition from their hope in a literal kingdom to a spiritual one. It had accomplished something: it had prepared the way for further enlightenment; but had Jesus then dismissed them from His tuition, failure would have been inevitable.

It is an interesting question to ask, why Jesus did not return to heaven immediately upon His resurrection? Why forty days of earthly visitations after

138 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

He had conquered death? There may be other answers, but here is no doubt the most significant one: Jesus had a company of disciples and particularly apostles, who had taken His "Course of Instruction" on the importance of spiritual things compared to material, but who had failed when the test came. They were in need of being re-enrolled in His School of Transition for His "Course of Demonstration", which He was now prepared to give them. "Eyegate", as well as "eargate", was an important factor in the School of the Master, as it has ever been in every successful school since, and Jesus recognised this pedagogical fact. He spent these forty days in *demonstrating* to His disciples the truth which he had taught them in word before His crucifixion, in assisting them in getting across from their materialism to a spiritual conception of Him and His mission; interpreting the "kingdom of God" in the light of the death of the King (Acts 1:3).

It is interesting to note that Jesus made an appointment with them, before His crucifixion, as is mentioned in Matt. 26:31, 33; 28:7, 10, 16. While there may have been some other purpose in the appointment of Galilee by Jesus as the meeting place, a careful study of the whole subject leads to the conclusion that it was Galilee where Jesus knew some of His apostles were sure to resort, and He met

them on their own grounds, to give them a demonstration of His spiritual personality, even reminding them of His appointment with them through the women who first saw Him at the tomb (Matt. 28:7). Accordingly we find seven of them back at the sea of Tiberias, fishing, where Jesus appeared to them (John 21:1-24). It was here that Jesus dined with them on the seashore, and exacted from Peter a confession of his love, and gave him the commission to feed His sheep.

While Jesus appeared to His disciples eight or nine distinct times (some count eleven), each one serving its purpose, there are a few of these appearances which throw special light upon the nature of Christ's present spiritual kingdom.

Jesus, having listened to the gloomy conversation of the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, chided them saying: "Oh, foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?" Beginning at Moses, He explained to them the Scriptures concerning the Christ. How we wish that the sacred historian had given us a full account of these Messianic expositions, but He did not. Although the disciples knew Him not, they had found one who was able to set over against their pessimistic view one of cheery optimism, and they invited Him to tarry with them,

140 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

for it was evening. A picture of Oriental hospitality! When they sat down to the evening meal, and Jesus, as He had often done in their presence, blessed the bread and brake it, they recognised Him. But the strangeness of the event was, that no sooner had he been recognised by them than He vanished out of their sight. Then said they to one another: "Was not our heart burning within us as He spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" Luke 24:32. This was upon the evening of the day of His resurrection.

But in Jerusalem an interesting event was occurring. Prompted by an inner, inexplicable something, the apostles gathered from their retreating places—John from his home, where, at Jesus' request, he had taken Mary, others from their seclusions where they had wept out the sorrow of their hearts for having forsaken Jesus. One by one they arrived at their accustomed meeting place until the eleven were there, except Thomas. Whether it had been their practice to bar the door while Jesus was yet with them we are not told; but John informs us that upon this occasion the door was "shut", for fear of the Jews (20:19), which no doubt means, barred. The Jews could not be trusted: they had just succeeded in crucifying Jesus, and those who had been His disciples had no guarantee of safety.

But the things which occurred at Emmaus were

too good to keep. Supper was quickly eaten or abandoned, and an evening trip was made to Jerusalem. Those Emmaus disciples had hastily traversed the thirty hilly furlongs (four miles) lying between their village and Jerusalem,¹ and almost breathlessly appeared and announced that Jesus was indeed risen for He had not only appeared unto Simon, but also to them.

While the apostles were listening to the strange-sounding things which were being told them by those who had arrived from Emmaus, behold Jesus stood in their midst, saying: "Peace be unto you" (Luke 24:36). So ill-prepared were the apostles for such a demonstration of Jesus that they were terrified, thinking Him to be a spirit. It was not until He had shown them His hands and His feet, that they believed Him to be the Christ who had been crucified. It was then that He demonstrated by his resurrected body, which retained marks of the crucifixion, what He had previously taught them in word, and said: "These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms, concerning me. . . . Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day" (Luke 24:44, 46). Christ points out the fact

¹ "Codex Vaticanus" gives the distance as sixty furlongs.

142 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

that His suffering and triumph over death are predicted in each one of the three divisions of the Old Testament—Law of Moses, Prophets and Psalms. As they meditated upon the Scriptures in the light of the demonstration Jesus gave them of Himself, their understandings were enlightened so that they comprehended the Scriptures.

At this first appearance of Jesus in the barred chamber in Jerusalem, Thomas was not present. When it was reported to him, he declared that to *see* the nail-prints in the hands and the spear-print in the side would not convince him; that nothing less than putting his finger into the print of the hands and his hand into the wounded side would be sufficient evidence for him that Jesus had arisen (John 20:24-25). He demanded both to *see* and to *feel*, to employ the sense of touch, as well as the sense of sight, before believing. How materialistic! How human!

Just a week later, on the second "first" day of the week after the resurrection of Jesus (note this beginning of the observance of the day now called the Christian Sabbath) the disciples were again assembled in the same Jerusalem chamber, with the door again barred. This time Thomas was present. There is no hint in the record whether the apostles did or did not anticipate that Jesus might appear in their midst again. But Jesus came, and, without rap

or signal, stood in their midst. There was present one disciple—a learner, although called an apostle, who, being behind the rest of the class in “the course of demonstration” because of his absence from the previous meeting, needed special attention. Jesus knew the thought of Thomas, as well as his need, and immediately called upon him, not rebuking him with harsh or accusing words, but inviting him to do the very things which Thomas had declared only could convince him that Christ was risen. We are not told that Thomas did thrust his finger into the nail print nor his hand into the side of Jesus; but we are assured that Thomas was convinced, for he answered: “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). Thus the transition was made in the thinking of the apostles, by which they were able to comprehend the Christ as living upon the resurrection side of the grave.

Let us follow, if possible, the impressions which these appearances likely made upon the apostles, as they assembled for other and later meetings. “I wonder whether Christ will meet with us tonight,” reasoned they. “He may appear in our midst at any time.” “He may be present now, only we cannot see Him.” How their hearts must have burned anew and afresh as they met in their accustomed place, realizing that Jesus might be present, unseen

144 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

by them! The lesson had been learned by demonstration, that the presence of Christ must be expected from then on, not as a bodily presence, but a spiritual presence; and Jesus could now give them His command to "Go and teach all nations", promising them: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

But the question will likely be asked: Why did Jesus *forbid* Mary to touch Him (John 20:17), and *invite* Thomas to do so (John 20:27)? The immediate reason which Jesus gave for forbidding Mary to touch Him, was that He had not yet ascended unto the Father. Between the two occasions, which were a week apart, Christ may have gone into the presence of the Father, thus removing the cause involved in the prohibition to Mary. But may there not have been a difference in the motives prompting Mary and Thomas to touch Jesus, with which Jesus also reckoned? Mary desired to touch the new Jesus for the purpose of identifying Him with the old Jesus, while Thomas desired to see the marks of the old Jesus to identify Him as the new Jesus. Mary's look was a backward one, while that of Thomas was a forward look. Christ differentiates even our motives, and rebukes or encourages accordingly.

One more lesson in "the Course of Demonstra-

tion". The forty-day period is drawing to a close. Jesus having counselled them what steps to take in preparation for the next course in the "School of Transition", the "Course of Experience", bidding them to tarry at Jerusalem until the coming of the Holy Spirit, led them to the Mount of Olives, where He was taken up, a cloud receiving Him out of their sight (Acts 1:9). With tear-dimmed eyes they watched Him until the last vision faded out of their sight. Turning their longing faces earthward, they beheld two men in white apparel (angels), who had come to direct the thinking of the apostles in relation to this demonstration on the part of Jesus. He had told them that He was going away. He had also taught them concerning His return. Note what these angelic instructors say: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus (not another, not the Holy Spirit), who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner (not at death, not in some political event), as ye beheld him going into heaven (in a cloud)."

If this last lesson in demonstration has any significance at all, it is this: The same Jesus who passed from the realm of the seen into the realm of the unseen, shall again pass from the realm of the unseen into the realm of the seen. As a cloud received Him out of their sight, so a cloud will give Him back again.

THE COURSE OF EXPERIENCE

Much as was accomplished for the Apostles by Christ's teachings and demonstrations, it is evident that they were not entirely clear concerning the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom. The very last question which they propounded to Jesus was: "Dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Even after His resurrection, His apostles seem to have entertained an idea that He might yet restore to Israel immediately an earthly kingdom. To an ordinary teacher such stupidity would have appeared incurable; but not so to the great master Teacher. He did not chide them for a hope of a restored kingdom in Israel; but knowing that the course of experience through which they were about to be taken would clarify their Messianic hope, He answered: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has set within his own authority." There is a "time" and a "season" for the realisation of this hope, but Jesus turned their eyes in a different direction—the direction of a spiritual kingdom in which should lay their primary interest, and said: "But (notice the adversative conjunction, "but") ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part

of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Jesus had declared that the end of the age and the crowning of the Son of Man should not take place until the Gospel had been preached to the whole world, as a witness unto all nations (Matt. 24:14, 37), and now He is preparing His apostles to enter upon the work of witnessing to the whole world, which He had declared to be a prerequisite to His second coming. He would have them busy in preparing the way for His coming, rather than to indulge them concerning "times" and "seasons." Lange, in his Commentary on Acts, treating this question which the disciples asked Jesus concerning the kingdom, is quite right when he insists, that Jesus did not disapprove of the question asked, but rather confirmed their kingdom hope by declaring that "the Father had fixed the time". He adds: "Jesus withheld from them and from us a knowledge only of the time, but did not leave the fact itself involved in doubt. The Old and New Testaments establish the truth that Israel may look forward to a future condition which is full of promise."²

Pentecost was epoch-making in the lives of the apostles in a number of ways. It resulted in their unification and their sanctification. Besides, it did a great thing for them in the clarifying of their Messianic hope. It took this marvelous experience

² "Commentary on Acts," p. 14.

148 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

to give them discernment concerning the spiritual and literal aspects of Christ's kingdom. Peter, as the Pentecostal spokesman, could then see clearly that Christ's sufferings and resurrection, even His ascension unto heaven had been predicted (Acts 2:31-36), and that Pentecost was a fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel (verses 16-18), which must precede the day of the Lord (verse 20). He also had a beautiful and clarified vision of Jesus which he expressed in these words: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus, whom ye crucified" (Acts 2:36). Note the three names used in this verse: "Jesus, Christ's human name; "Christ" (Greek, the Anointed one), the name which signifies Redeemer; "Lord", the name which expresses His Kingship. This is a remarkable verse too little understood and appreciated. Alexander Maclaren says of it: "The three names are names of the same person, but they proclaim altogether different aspects of His work and His character. The name 'Jesus' is the name of the man, and brings to us a Brother; the name 'Christ' is the name of office, and brings to us a Redeemer; the name 'Lord' is the name of dignity, and brings to us a King." Peter also recognised the fact that this Lord and Christ was to remain in the heavens, at the right hand of the Father, until the time should come for the triumphing over

Apostles Still in the School of Transition 149

His enemies (Acts 2:34-35), until the Father who had sent Him forth the first time in humility should send Him forth a second time in glory, until He who was indeed the world's Redeemer should also become the world's King.

CHAPTER XI

A REVIVED AND CLARIFIED MESSIANIC HOPE

The apostles who in the School of Christ had been so slow to comprehend the two distinct aspects of the Messianic hope, seem at last to have grasped them, at least in a practical manner; for, without a single exception, the eleven set themselves to the task of spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom, making Christ King in the hearts and lives of men wherever they might be found who were willing to crown Him, at the same time keeping a watchful eye for His return.

Although the return of Christ was a favourite New Testament theme, stressed by every writer, and appears to have been the hope about which everything clustered, and the light in which everything was valued, they did not lag in their efforts to herald to the world His first coming. In enthusiastically carrying out Christ's command to preach the Gospel to all the world, every apostle except one gave his life as a martyr. John alone was, in the purposes of God, and by His providences, spared to

reach a ripe old age, and, according to tradition, died at a very old age at his home in Ephesus.

The apostles are sometimes spoken of as having been in error, because they expected that Christ might return in their day, and He did not. Although they looked for Him in their day, and He did not return, and has not returned yet, they were not in error. They had been admonished frequently to watch and be in readiness for His return. In their attitude they were quite right, for it was the attitude in which Christ desired that His disciples should live. Without discussing the merit or demerit of any term which may now be employed concerning His coming, it may be asserted, that the attitude of these apostles is the attitude which every Christian should assume toward the coming of Christ—that of readiness. To the saint, death is not the great event, but the coming of Christ; for if he remains until Christ's coming he shall be translated. If he has died, he shall be resurrected. But the "change" issues in the same result—a glorified body, and takes place at the same time—at the coming of Christ (I. Cor. 15:52; I. Thess. 4:16-17).

The eschatology (teachings concerning last things) of the later New Testament books centers around James (the brother of our Lord), Paul, Peter and John. God has used each one of these four

152 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

writers to make a specific contribution to the subject, which, supplementing the Prophets and the teachings of Jesus, forms a very comprehensive outline. Of course God has wisely and purposely hidden some things from us, as Jesus plainly taught. We may formulate very dogmatically our ideas concerning the subject of eschatology, and when these things really come to pass we will doubtless have many causes for surprise; not because God's outline as indicated in His Word is incorrect, but because of our wrong interpretations of certain things. In their enthusiasm, some have gone too far in speculating upon details where God has purposely given outline, only. This is to be regretted.

The former learners have now become teachers, and the New Testament writings, beginning at the Acts of the Apostles, contain their teachings. What we desire to do now, is to sit at the feet of these Apostles who have graduated in the School of the Master, having taken the course of "Instruction", "Demonstration", and "Experience", and hear what they have to say on the subject of the Messianic Hope, which constituted so large a part of their curriculum. The two apostles, who of the twelve served as the inspired penmen of the New Testament, are Peter and John, who, with James had constituted something of an "inner circle" of discipleship with the Master. From these two we shall

A Revived and Clarified Messianic Hope 153

hear; also from James, the brother of our Lord, who was bishop of Jerusalem, and from the great Apostle, Paul. If there is any progress in God's revelation of His plan for the world, we have reason to expect that both the spiritual and literal aspects of the Messianic programme which were introduced by the prophets and taught distinctly by Christ, will remain distinct and become more clarified in the writings of the inspired penmen of the New Testament.

JEW AND GENTILE EPOCHS

There was held in the city of Jerusalem about the year A.D. 50, the first Christian Church Conference of which we have any record (Acts 15). It was, in a number of respects, a very important conference. The purpose for which it was called was to determine the relation of Jew and Gentile in Christianity, and the discussion finally centered about the Messianic programme. Paul and Barnabas were there, who told of their remarkable experiences among the Gentiles. The Pharisees, who resented Gentile missionary effort, and were insistent that Gentiles become Jews in practice—be circumcised—, in order to have any association with the Jews, were also present. Peter, very enthusiastically and with great confidence, related how God had visited the Gentiles (citing the case of Cornelius, Acts 10),

154 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

making no difference between Jew and Gentile, purifying the hearts of the Gentiles by faith, giving unto them the Holy Ghost, as He did the Jews at Pentecost. John the Apostle was also present (Gal. 2:9).

When the rest had finished their addresses, James, who was evidently the chairman and monitor of the conference, in a calm, firm and deliberate manner, gave the decision or "sentence" in the matter (Acts 15:19-20). The preface of this verdict is a very remarkable one, for it reveals that James had a marvellous grasp upon prophetic interpretation, and a remarkably clear vision of the relation of the Jew and Gentile in those two periods of God's working among men which may be called Jew and Gentile epochs. His address is as follows:

"Brethren, hearken unto me: Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

After these things I will return,
And I will build again the tabernacle of David,
which is fallen;
And I will build again the ruins thereof,
And I will set it up:
That the residue of men may seek after the
Lord,
And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is
called,
Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known
from of old."

—Acts 15:14-18.

A Revived and Clarified Messianic Hope 155

This is a somewhat free quotation from Amos 9:11, 12.

Lange's Commentary on Acts, referring to the quotation made by James, says: "It was not without guidance of the Holy Ghost that James was conducted precisely to this passage."¹ To this it is not difficult to assent, for these early church fathers were dealing with a most difficult and delicate problem, and the Holy Spirit would be unfaithful to His mission if He were not to give guidance to such sincere souls. Much was involved in the decision at which they were about to arrive, for they stood upon the threshold of a far-reaching programme—a programme of tremendous responsibility.

The writer, in all humility, ventures an interpretation of this great passage.

1. There is, in the Messianic programme, an epoch which is characteristically Gentile (Verse 14). Such an age has already been referred to (Luke 21:24).

2. Following such a Gentile epoch, there will be one distinctly Jewish. This statement is introduced with the phrase, "After these things" (Verse 16).

3. During this distinctly Jewish period it is said, that God will return and rebuild the ruins of David, which kingdom had been reduced be-

¹ Lange's Commentary on Acts, p. 285.

156 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

fore its final fall to a mere "tabernacle" or tent.

4. The purpose of the Gentile epoch will be occupied in or utilised for the calling out—"looking out" (Pulpit Commentary) a people for His name, from among the Gentile nations.

5. The purpose of the Jewish epoch is stated: "That the residue (rest) of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" Verse 17.

6. That this programme constitutes no experiment upon the part of God, but that He knew from of old how He would work out the difficult problems of human redemption (Verse 18).

7. That the prophets had visions of a glorious epoch for Israel which has not yet been fulfilled in Israel's experience, and which must consequently be yet future (Verse 15). A careful study of the later prophets leads to this conclusion. The Pulpit Commentary says: "Nothing could be more germane to St. James' argument than thus to show from the words of Amos that God's present purpose of taking the Gentiles to be His people was, like all His other works, formed from the beginning of the world." ²

² "Pulpit Commentary on Acts, Vol. II, page 3.

A Revived and Clarified Messianic Hope 157

The Pulpit Commentary also says: "The writings of the prophets were used by the apostles as a guide to the interpretation of the signs of the present, and for directions as to present duty."³

Thus the Messianic programme was seen by these Christian leaders in a wonderful perspective, and the Messianic hope was clarified. Though many of the details must have been, of necessity, unknown to them, God's plan for the ages lay about them, past, present, and future, and they caught the thrill of a wonderful inspiration as they found themselves standing in the midst of such a marvelous panorama. With this vision before them, they went forth to spend and to be spent in the interest of God's programme for the world. They evidently expected that God would, in His own time, reestablish the Davidic throne which was promised to his descendant, Christ (Luke 1:32), but which He has not yet received.

The responsibility of the evangelisation of the world rested primarily upon the Jews, since Christianity was originally a movement within Judaism. The Jews cast aside this responsibility, and the Gentile Christians have shouldered it, and are carrying it out in some measure, at least. It is to be hoped that the day is coming when the Jews will

³ "Pulpit Commentary on Acts," Vol. II, page 14.

158 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

again assume the responsibility which they thrust aside, and become the flaming messengers of the Gospel. In the face of a world of seventeen hundred million of souls, almost a thousand million of whom have never heard of Christ; when, according to reliable statistics, the population in heathen lands is increasing more rapidly than they are being evangelised, and at a time when the non-Christian population of the United States, one of the most Christian nations of the world, is increasing each year proportionately, the ushering in of a Jewish epoch, when the labours of the Gentile missionary force would be augmented by a mighty army of Jewish heralds of the Gospel of Christ, should be hailed with great joy. Apart from such an epoch of missionary effort, the missionary prospects of the world seem dark.

CHAPTER XII

OTHER STAGES IN THE MESSIANIC PROGRAMME

The popular phrase, "The Return of Christ", is a comprehensive one, and, as generally used, includes not only one event, but various events in the future Messianic programme. There is not a perfect agreement among Christians as to the various events included in the term, much less is there full accord as to the details of the events. Unwarranted speculations, which have been freely indulged in by certain interpreters of prophecy, have separated many good people unnecessarily, and brought the great theme of Christ's second coming into reproach. But even such mistakes do not disprove the fact.

It appears that our teaching has been fragmentary upon this great subject. One has grasped some aspect of the truth and then emphasised it out of all proportion to the rest of the truth, while others have gone to quite an opposite extreme. It has not been the purpose of this treatise to enter into minute examinations or discussions of any one aspect of the Messianic Hope, but to present as

160 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

nearly as possible a symmetrically-proportioned and Biblical outline of this "Hope", showing how it is the great theme of the Bible, to which everything else contributes. All of our religious thinking, whether past, present or future, should be organised around an intelligent Messianic programme.

It is only by a careful study of the Bible as a whole that the various stages of the Messianic programme stand out distinctly. Even in the New Testament such expressions as, the "appearing", the "coming" or the "day of the Lord", sometimes gather about them all of the events of eschatology without differentiating one from the other.

HIS APPEARING

One of the events in the future Messianic programme is expressed by the word "appearing" (Greek, *epiphaneia*). This term is used to express the event with which are connected the following:

1. The "blessed hope" of the Church, the attitude of the Church in the expectancy of Christ's return (Titus 2:13).

2. The "bringing" to nought the "lawless one" who is back of the world's programme of wickedness (the anti-Christ) at Christ's "manifestation" (*Epiphaneia*) (II. Thess. 2:8).

3. It is the time until which saints are exhorted to be faithful (I. Tim. 6:14).

Other Stages in the Messianic Programme 161

While the theme of the return of Christ is frequently referred to in the Pauline Epistles, it is in the Thessalonian letters that the doctrine is more fully outlined. It would seem that the aspect as outlined in these epistles is that of the "appearing" of Christ, at which time the living saints are to be translated and those who have died are to be resurrected, and together they are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and to be with Him from that time on, wherever He may be.

Paul's teaching concerning the "Appearing" of Christ in the First Thessalonian letter may be outlined as follows:

1. Christ will appear in the clouds (4:17).
2. The souls of the saints who have died, Christ will bring with Him (4:14).
3. His appearing will be attended by a shout, the sound of a trumpet and the voice of an archangel (4:16).
4. The bodies of the dead saints shall be resurrected (4:16).
5. The living saints shall be translated (4:17).
6. The righteous dead are to be translated immediately before the living saints are translated (4:16).
7. The righteous ones (all) are to be caught

162 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

up to meet their Lord, ever to be with Him (4:17).

8. The doctrine of the coming of Christ is to be a comfort against anxiety and worry, which might arise concerning eschatological questions which we cannot answer (4:18).

9. It will occur at a time when the world is saying "peace and safety" (peace and preparedness) (5:2).

10. His appearing will not be a surprise to a church ever watchful for His return (5:3).

It is quite fair to say, that the contribution which God has used Paul to make is relative to the "appearing" of Christ, as contrasted with any subsequent stages, as Paul does not here continue the outline of later events, but closes it by saying: "And so shall we ever be with the Lord."

There are those who insist that Paul was the victim of an "apocalyptic delusion of his day," when he used the pronoun in the first person, plural, "we," in speaking of those who might be living at the return of Christ in Chapter 4, verse 17. This, it is argued, proves that Paul expected Christ to come in his day, which He did not; hence Paul laboured under a delusion. But had he used the third personal pronoun, "those" or "they," it is likely that his first readers, the Thessalonian Christians, would have read out of the epistle the evidence that Christ was not coming

Other Stages in the Messianic Programme 163

in Paul's day. Keeping in mind then the much emphasised necessity of always being ready to meet the Lord, it was the perfectly natural and the only proper thing for him to do—to speak of Christ's return as at least possible at any time. It is becoming more and more apparent, however, that the Messianic programme belonging to the Holy Spirit's dispensation, though partially fulfilled in Paul's day, was to be more fully carried out before Christ's return, and that until the programme is executed in keeping with God's plan, Christ will not return.

Again, there are those who hold that Paul's first Thessalonian letter was so faulty that he found it necessary to write another to correct the former one. It is true that Paul wrote a second epistle, but not to correct the former one. He wrote to correct a wrong interpretation which the Thessalonians had placed upon the first epistle. Some of them had evidently concluded that, if the Lord might come at any time, there was no need to labour, and had quit their jobs. Paul sent them a stern rebuke, declaring that he who would not work should not eat. But this was no new message from him, for he says: "When we were with you, this we commanded you" (II. Thess. 3:10).

The fact that the Thessalonians misinterpreted Paul's first letter to them about Christ's coming, and that he found it necessary to write a second to

164 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

set them right, does not argue against a correct Messianism on the part of Paul. On the contrary, it should be interpreted as an argument in favour of a correct Pauline Messianism.

The church of Christ should profit by Paul's rebuke to the Thessalonians, and not allow such a blunder to be repeated. Christ wants to find every saint busily engaged in his legitimate occupation, profession or calling, when He returns.

While the distinct contribution which God used Paul to make to the teaching concerning the Messianic programme was, as is indicated above, there is evidence that he kept the spiritual (invisible) and literal (or visible) quite distinct in his heart and mind, as is evidenced by the following considerations.

Paul's definition of the kingdom of God as it existed in a spiritual sense in the world was: "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14: 17). This reminds us at once of the teaching of Jesus, when he turned the attention of His disciples away from material things which were of mere secondary importance, such as food and raiment, and said: "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

Paul's ministerial charge to Timothy had in it, as a supreme inspiration, an admonition to be found

Other Stages in the Messianic Programme 165

faithful at the appearing of Christ: "I charge thee . . . that thou keep the commandment without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in its own times (the times kept from the apostles, but known only to the Father, Acts 1:7) he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (I. Tim. 6:13-15). Dummelow's commentary is quite correct in saying that, "These words do not necessarily indicate a belief on St. Paul's part that the coming of the Lord would be in Timothy's lifetime. It might be, and then Timothy would have kept his deposit to the end if he were faithful; it might be later, and then he would have done his part in keeping it in his generation."¹

Paul also interpreted the sacrament instituted by Christ as a prophecy of His return. Jesus said, when He instituted it: "This do in remembrance of me." "I shall not eat it . . . I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." (Luke 22:16-19.) Matthew's account reads: "Take, eat; this is my body . . . Drink ye all of it . . . I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matt. 26:26-29.) In teaching concerning the sacrament Paul quotes the words of Jesus,

¹ "One Volume Commentary," page 1000.

166 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

and then adds, by way of interpretation: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death *till He come*" (I. Cor. 11: 26).

Paul recognised Christ as still his King and the King of other Christians even after He had ascended to heaven, for he says: "Our citizenship (our seat of government) is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3: 19). Christ is represented as having been crowned in the life of His people as King; when He ascended to heaven to have carried with Him their loyalty as His subjects, and when He returns He will be hailed as their Saviour from the wickedness of this evil age, and as Lord (or King) in visible reality. This is a beautiful illustration of the fact that Christ's kingdom begins in the hearts and lives of His people here and now, and that, despite any of the intervening events, the relationship between Himself and His people—King and subjects—is never severed.

Regardless of what critics may say about Paul's belief in the personal return of Christ, it is evident that this subject remained a supreme one in his mind until the close of life, and in the moment when he stood upon the threshold of eternity. If his belief in the personal return of Christ was an "apocalyptic delusion," as we are told, he held fast to it until

Other Stages in the Messianic Programme 167

the end; for when Nero's beheading block was just beyond the curtain, and he was about to be led to it, he sent back to the world his final testimony: "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved *His appearing*" (II. Tim. 4:6-8).

THE GOLDEN AGE

Since the Messianic programme contemplates the redemption of the human race from sin and all its consequences, in so far as it is not hindered by an arbitrary use of human will, since it also includes a removal of sin's blight or curse from the earth, it is evident that there is yet something to follow the "appearing" of Christ which has been graphically portrayed by Paul.

Further, there are specific statements and promises which have been made by God, through prophets, angels and even Christ, Himself, which remain yet to be fulfilled after the event of His appearing for the saints which is sometimes called the "Rapture," which may be briefly summarised:

168 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

1. The word spoken by Amos, to which other prophets agree, that, after the Gentile age, God (evidently in the person of Christ) will return and set up again the tabernacle of David and rebuild the ruins, thereof (Amos, 9: 11-12).

2. The promise which the archangel Gabriel made to Mary, that her divinely-begotten son should be given the throne of His father, David, and that He should occupy it forever. This promise has not been fulfilled, as yet, but may be realised in the future golden age.

3. The assurance which Jesus gave to His apostles, that, as a reward for forsaking all, some day—"in the regeneration"—they should share with Him the rule of Israel (Matt. 19: 28).

Other references might be given, but these are representative.

Now concerning the probability of a "Golden Age":

Between the present state of the affairs of the world and the eternal state, between a world dominated by sin and a world from which every vestige or scar of sin has been removed, lies a great distance. A bound or leap from one state to the other would be a tremendous one. God could accomplish it so far as possibility is concerned; but having observed

Other Stages in the Messianic Programme 169

God in His carrying out a progressive Messianic programme, it is not at all improbable that some step in this programme should be found to lie between the present and the eternal state.

Despite the fact that some interpreters have attempted to spiritualise the prophetic utterance concerning Israel, the angel's promise to Mary and Christ's promise to His apostles, the fact still remains that, if language means anything, if these prophets and apostles and even Mary were not victims of rash and unrealisable promises, there is yet a very distinct stage in the earthly Messianic programme.

Prof. Chas. R. Erdman, of Princeton, said recently, in defending the doctrine of the personal return of Christ: "If it were a question of probability, it is fully as probable that Christ will come a second time, as it was that He would come the first time." Even more so it would seem, if there could be any difference, for it would require less of a grasp of the intellect to comprehend His coming a second time in the clouds of heaven, after He had been on earth and having promised to return ascended into heaven, than to grasp the fact of His coming a first time, making His appearance in the form of a little child. Just so, it is no less probable that God will use Israel in a very special way, in the age that is coming and which lies between this and the eternal state, to bring about a marked stage

170 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

of progress in the completion of the Messianic programme, than that He should have used Israel, as a nation, for the conservation of a monotheistic faith when the world had become idolatrous and pagan, and to give birth to the Christ, thus inaugurating, in the fullest sense, the Messianic programme at first. It is no more improbable that God will be faithful in fulfilling the materialistic aspect of the Messianic programme, than that He should fulfil the spiritual aspect.

Still more, the prophets predicted a golden age, when the recognised law would be the word of Jehovah, proceeding from Jerusalem; when God would judge between the nations; when weapons of warfare would be transformed into implements for peaceful industry; when nations would cease from war; when the ravenous beasts which have become "infected by man's sin" (George Adam Smith), would become harmless both to each other and to man; when a person dying at the age of a hundred years would be considered a mere child, etc. (Isa. 2:3, 4; 11:6-9). This age is yet in the future, and must represent a period as yet unknown to history. It will not be the perfect state, for people will still die, but an age when a great stride will have been made in the direction of a perfect state.

It was the Apostle John who was used of God to give us a panoramic view of this stage in the Mes-

Other Stages in the Messianic Programme 171

sianic programme. The description as it was made to him and is handed down to us is recorded in Revelation, chapters nineteen and twenty. A variety of interpretations, some of which are very fanciful indeed, have been given to these chapters. While it would be unwise to attempt any dogmatic or rigid interpretation of the details, the outline of the events are quite easily comprehended. Chapter nineteen shows the events leading up to this long looked-for age as follows:

1. The actual return of Christ, amidst the multitudinous shouts like mighty thunderings saying: "Hallelujah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty reigneth" (Verses 1-6).

2. Great rejoicing because the bride, the Lamb's wife, hath made herself ready (Verses 6-10).

3. The armies of heaven coming with Him (Verses 11-14). These "armies" no doubt refer to the saints who were caught up with Christ, as recorded in I. Thess. 4:17, for they appear clothed in "fine linen, bright and pure," and this is the exact description of the bride, the Lamb's wife, in verse 8, with the explanatory note added that, "fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

4. Judgment upon the enemies of Christ (Verses 15-21).

172 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

The following is an analysis of the twentieth chapter :

1. The period is spoken of as a thousand years (a millennium), during which Christ shall reign (Verse 6).

2. Satan is to be bound by the angel at the beginning of this period (Verses 1, 2).

3. There are to be thrones which will be occupied by certain ones who have been martyred, in a joint reign with Christ (Verse 4).

4. Those who share in this glorious period represent the "first resurrection," who are pronounced "blessed and holy," and who are called priests of Christ and of God (Verse 6).

5. Over these the "second death" (the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, Rev. 21 :8) hath no power (Verse 6).

6. The rest of the dead shall not be resurrected until these thousand years have ended (Verse 5).

7. Satan is to be loosed at the close of the period, to be permitted to test the work of God which was wrought while his operations were hindered (Verses 7-9).

8. Satan will be defeated and cast into the lake of fire forever (Verse 10).

9. At the close of the period will occur the

Other Stages in the Messianic Programme 173

second resurrection and the judgment (Verses 11-15).

The duration of this period is declared to be "a thousand years." The language, it is argued, may express merely an indefinite period, and this may be true, as it is prophetic language; but since such a conclusion would afford us no more definite information, it appears more advisable to use the Scripture term, a thousand years, or its equivalent, the millennium (Latin), to designate it.

It should be noted that this period, so fully described, provides a place in the Messianic programme for a personal, visible reign of Christ upon earth. It also anticipates a fulfilment of the prophetic utterances concerning a peculiar ministry of Israel to the nations of the world. It gives realisation to the Angelic promise to Mary that Jesus should occupy the throne of David and also to the promise which Christ made to His twelve apostles. It makes historically possible the "Golden Age" foreseen by Isaiah—a period which can be neither the present nor the eternal state, but which lies between these two states, bearing resemblances of each.

Objections are raised against basing so important a conclusion as this upon a single passage of Scripture, found in such a book as Revelation and surrounded by such highly figurative and apocalyptic language. While the term "thousand years" is

174 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

used only in this instance, the same thing is described in the Old Testament in less minutiae. The "Little Apocalypse" in Isa. 24:21-23 is no doubt an Old Testament prophetic vision of the same stage of the Messianic programme which John was given to describe in greater detail. The last nine chapters of Ezekiel contain a prophetic description of a "New Theocracy," which will come in God's own time. Just as other visions of truth were made clearer in the illumination of God's perfect revelation, Jesus Christ, so this aspect of the Messianic programme is made to stand out in clearer detail. Isaiah spoke of this event as occurring "in that day": John speaks of it as a "thousand years." Since with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day (II. Peter 3:8), there is perfect harmony in the representations of this period by Isaiah and John.

TRIBULATION AND JUDGMENT

The terms "tribulation" and "judgment" are very closely related, though absolutely distinct. Tribulation is inflicted by man; judgment is sent by God. While tribulation is man inflicted, God may permit it to constitute a part of His judgment. The element of retribution characterises both of them. Retribution is exactly the opposite of reward. When both good and evil exist, and we find the good

Other Stages in the Messianic Programme 175

being rewarded, we may most reasonably expect that evil is suffering retribution. Dr. Albert C. Knudson, in one of the most recent theological works, entitled: "The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament," quotes Prof. Bowne as saying: "One thing on which the moral nature is categorical and unyielding is that moral good and moral evil shall not be treated alike. It would be the overthrow of the moral universe to hold that moral evil could ever be ignored as indifferent or treated as if it were good." He further adds: "The ill desert of the evil will is a fundamental moral axiom."²

In keeping with this fundamental law of the moral universe, which is simply another way of expressing God's approval of right and disapproval of evil, this Messianic programme progresses.

When the saints are caught up with Christ to enjoy His presence and begin to reap the reward for their good, sinners may expect that the retribution for evil has begun. This reaping begins in what may be called tribulation, and continues in some form or another until it closes in what is nothing less than judgment.

Tribulation. Christ speaks of a great tribulation the like of which never was since the world began, and never will be (Matt. 24:21). Primarily this referred to the awful days preceding the destruction

² "The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament," p. 267.

176 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

of Jerusalem; but that, in a second reference, it refers to something greater and farther reaching it is quite evident. Awful as were the days during the siege of Titus in A.D. 70, when people were reduced by hunger to the eating of rats and even refuse, and Jerusalem was made a living grave, the events hardly fulfil such a prophecy completely. Since these prophetic words, in Matt. 24th chapter and Luke the 21st chapter, in a double reference, also refer to the coming of Christ, this particular part of the prophecy may easily refer to a tribulation which centers about the coming of Christ.

In the book of Revelation, fifteen chapters (4-18), preceding the chapters which deal with the return of Christ to the earth and the millennial reign, deal with judgments of one kind or other. Dr. Geo. L. Robinson, although not concurring in the pre-millennarian idea, in his syllabus on Revelation, speaks of chapters 4-16 as the "Book of Doom." Chapters seventeen and eighteen might also be included, as they are also devoted to "doom"—the doom of Babylon. Dr. Robinson continues the description of the judgments picturesquely as follows: "Beginning with warnings, John soon passes to judgments which, in graduated crescendo, ever become more and more severe. These warnings and judgments are presented under the three forms of "seals" which are broken, "trumpets" which are

Other Stages in the Messianic Programme 177

sounded, and "bowls" of divine wrath which are poured out." ³

The reader must be referred to commentaries and works which deal minutely with the book of Revelation for a fuller treatment of the chapters, as a mere outline can be given here.

1. An introductory vision, "teaching that behind all human history there is a God in Christ"—the "Lamb"—"lion" (Chapters 4 and 5).

2. The breaking of the seven seals (Chap. 6: 1-8: 5).

3. The seven trumpet blasts (Chap. 8: 6-11: 19).

4. The seven bowls of God's accumulated wrath (Chaps. 15 and 16).

5. The Doom of Rome (Chaps. 17 and 18).

But God's judgments have in them a mixture of mercy. His picture has in it some lights even though the shadows are deep. Interspersed in this book of "doom," amidst the warnings, woes and judgments, there are parenthetical visions which indicate what will be occurring during these awful days.

1. The vision of the secured ones (Chap. 7).

This company is composed of 144,000 Jews,

³ Robinson, "Syllabus on Revelation."

178 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

who have seals upon their foreheads, and, together with an innumerable company of Gentile saints from all the nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues, are made secure from the impending judgments. They are represented as, the ones coming out of the great tribulation who washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Verse 14). They are "tribulation saints." This vision prefaces the breaking of the seventh "seal."

2. The vision of the "little book" and the "two witnesses" (Chaps. 10:1-11:14). The little book possibly symbolises the "faithful testimony" of the tribulation saints. (See 10:11.) The treatment of the "two witnesses," whoever they may be, shows that human depravity has now reached such a hopeless stage that even further warnings are useless. This vision prefaces the sounding of the seventh "trumpet."

3. The vision of the mighty struggle between the contending forces of good and evil, culminating in the "New theocracy" (Chaps. 12-14). The anti-Christ symbolised by a beast is crushed, and the throne of God is established by the Lamb upon Mt. Zion, which may be the seat of the millennial reign on earth.

This vision prefaces the pouring out of the seven "bowls."

Other Stages in the Messianic Programme 179

Relative to the period covered by these warnings, woes and judgments, there are diversities of opinions. After the blowing of the sixth trumpet, which belongs to the second series of "doom" or "woes," it is said that it would be given to God's witnesses to testify twelve hundred and sixty days, which would be forty-two months, or three and one-half years (11:3). As the period of Daniel's last week (a prophetic week of years) is predicted as a period of "abominations that make desolate." (Dan. 9:25-27), it would appear that approximately seven years would be occupied by these tribulation events. This seems to correspond, because the "woes" are practically half finished when the events are described as continuing three and a half more years.

Before leaving this apocalyptic description of the tribulation period, mention should be made of the fact that in Chapter 6, of Revelation, is recorded in brief the order of events from the "rapture" to the return of Christ to reign. The disturbances in nature, such as Christ depicted—the darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of the stars and the shaking of the heavens (Matt. 24:29), are spoken of as occurring after the opening of the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12-17). These words of Christ are then to be fulfilled at the time of His coming to reign. The succeeding chapters of Revelation, chapters

180 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

7-19, record the fuller details of the judgments of God preceding the millennium.

The Judgment Proper. While the element of judgment has been present in the woes and tribulations, the judgment proper is reserved until the close of the millennial period. It is graphically described in Rev. 20:11-15, as occurring at the close of the millennial period.

An analysis of the judgment description discloses the following events in their order :

1. The appearing of the "great white throne" with its occupant (Verse 11).
2. The resurrection of the (remaining) dead (Verse 13).
3. The assembling of the universe before the throne (Verse 13a).
4. The opening of the heavenly records (Verse 12).
5. Judgment according to the books (Verse 12b).
6. Death and hell (hades—the underworld), together with those whose names were not found in the "book of life," cast into the lake of fire (Verses 14 and 15).

Again we have the authority of Christ for this event in the Messianic programme. He describes the same event in Matt. 25:31-46. He, Himself, is the Judge who shall sit upon the throne. Those whose

Other Stages in the Messianic Programme 181

names are found written in the "book of life" have entered into spiritual relationship with Him in advance of the judgment, and continue in His presence, enjoying life forevermore. Those whose names are not in the book of life must suffer the "second death," which is the final separation from the possibility or source of eternal life.

ALL THINGS NEW

When God made the heavens and earth they stood at the head of the list of items in the creative programme. In their remaking, they stand at the close of the Messianic programme. In creation God began with the material world, closing with man. In redemption he begins with man and closes with the material world.

The Process. Whatever Scriptural knowledge we may have of the *process* by which God is going to bring about a new heaven and a new earth, must be obtained from another New Testament writer, the Apostle Peter. Why John was led to pass by the subject of the *process* in this part of the Messianic programme, and why Peter was inspired to write upon it cannot be stated; but it matters not. God has used, even in Old Testament times, a certain prophet to emphasise one aspect of truth, while He has used another to emphasise another (Amos,

182 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*
righteousness; Hosea, love, etc.), and the practice is continued in the New Testament.

The description of this re-creating process in relation to the material world is found in II. Peter 3:9-14, and when analysed results in the following:

1. It will occur in the "day of the Lord." This term covers the whole series of eschatological events, and may not refer so much to duration as order (Verse 9).

2. The elements shall be on fire and melt with great heat, and be "dissolved" (Verse 12).

3. Emerging in the place of the old heavens (not heaven the abode of God, but the heavens around about the earth) and the old earth, shall come forth a "new heaven and new earth" (Verse 13b).

4. The new heaven and new earth shall be the dwelling place of righteousness (Verse 13c).

5. The new heaven and new earth is according to God's promise (Verse 13a). Doubtless reference is here made to Isa. 65:17; 66:22, where the promise is made.

It may be urged, that this is highly figurative language and must not be interpreted literally. The only answer to this might be, that we are not interested in "processes" so much as results; but we have no other suggestion as to process, and know of no reasons why God may not use the process

Other Stages in the Messianic Programme 183

described in bringing about these results. While there are questions all along the course of events in the Messianic programme which we cannot answer, this event appears reasonably necessary and probable; and to ascertain the final and only authoritative word on the subject, we are obliged to come back to the inspired penman.

The Results. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away: and the sea is no more" (Rev. 21:1). The final event in the Messianic programme has been reached, and the perfect and eternal state begins. The purpose toward which every preceding event has been aimed has been realised. The redemption of man's soul was accomplished during his life by the operations of Divine grace; his body has been redeemed in the resurrection, and his home has eventually been redeemed in the recreation of the new heaven and new earth.

In the last two chapters of Revelation we have pictured conditions as they will exist in the eternal state. The Messianic programme is prophetically finished. He who has promised the "new heavens and new earth" has been faithful: "They are come to pass" (21:5-6). He is not only the "Alpha"—the beginning: He is also "Omega"—the end. Then in the midst of the descriptions of the eternal state, a challenge is heralded to such as desire a part in

184 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

the completed Messianic programme: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 20:6-7). Also warning is given: "But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (21:8).

The Messianic programme, potent and perfect as it is, contains no redemption for such as persist in impenitence. The unjust remain unjust, just as the holy remain holy (22:11). Quoting another: "Eternal punishment is not so much an arbitrary law, as a result necessarily following in the very nature of things as the fruit results from the bud."

The state of affairs as described in the new earth may be summarised as follows:

1. There is to be a close relation between God and man (21:2-3).
2. There shall be no more "death," "sorrow," "crying" nor "pain" (21:4).
3. All tears shall be forever wiped away (21:4).
4. The glory of the nations shall be brought into its holy city, the New Jerusalem (21:26).

Other Stages in the Messianic Programme 185

5. Nothing which defiles shall ever enter it (21:27).

It is interesting to note the relation of the state depicted in the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of Revelation to the Edenic State.

1. The Edenic state was lost because of sin; this one is to be attained because of holiness.

2. The Edenic world gave place to "sorrow"; this is one in which all tears are to be wiped from men's eyes.

3. There the entrance was guarded by cherubim and flaming sword: here the gates are not shut, neither by day nor night.

4. There man was driven from the tree of life, and we do not see it again until now. Here it is found growing alongside of the river of life, and its fruits accessible to man.

It is significant that, after tracing the course of events of the Messianic programme, the New Testament closes with a gracious invitation, and a prayer for, and promise of, the Lord's return:

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that heareth, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely. . . . He who testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus."

—*Rev.* 22: 17-20.

186 *Progressive Unfolding of Messianic Hope*

A beautiful paragraph is found in Dr. Sampey's volume entitled, "Syllabus for Old Testament Study," which is here quoted as a final and befitting word.

"The trickling stream of promise, which took its rise in Eden on the day when sin first broke the harmony between God and man, gradually grew in depth and volume with the passing centuries until it became a mighty river of blessing, a glorious gospel of hope that cheered the faithful in earlier ages. To us the same great truths are made clearer and surer by the advent of the Messiah and His perfect life, His sublime death, and His glorious resurrection. Many kings and righteous men longed to see the wonders of His reign, and died in hope. We, too, are 'prisoners of hope'—He will come again!" *

*"Syllabus for Old Testament Study," p. 292.

THE END

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



124 974

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY